

MAY 1997

\$4.95 in USA  
\$5.95 in Canada

# CURRENT HISTORY

A Journal of Contemporary World Affairs



## AFRICA

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>The Great Lakes Crisis</b>                                 | Gérard Prunier 193                           |
| <b>Endgame in Zaire</b>                                       | Peter Rosenblum 200                          |
| <b>France and the Great Game in Africa</b>                    | Peter J. Schraeder 206                       |
| <b>Uganda's "Benevolent" Dictatorship</b>                     | J. Oloka-Onyango 212                         |
| <b>Tanzania: From Disillusionment<br/>to Guarded Optimism</b> | Harvey Glickman 217                          |
| <b>South Africa:<br/>The Perils of Normalcy</b>               | Antoinette Handley<br>and Jeffrey Herbst 222 |
| <b>Privatizing War in Sierra Leone</b>                        | William Reno 227                             |
| <b>Algeria: The Dialectic of Elections and Violence</b>       | Robert Mortimer 231                          |

---

**Book Reviews** On Africa 236

**The Month in Review** Country by Country, Day by Day 237



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# CURRENT HISTORY

FOUNDED IN 1914

MAY 1997

VOL. 96, NO. 610

## Editor

WILLIAM W. FINAN, JR.

## Assistant Editor

MEGAN J. BRESLIN

## Editorial Assistant

DOUGLAS WATSON

## Editorial Interns

MICHAEL BONENBERGER

EMILY SHARTIN

## Consulting Editor

JOHN RADZISZEWSKI

## Contributing Editors

ROSS N. BERKES

University of Southern California

DAVID B. H. DENOON

New York University

JOHN ERICKSON

University of Edinburgh

MARSHALL I. GOLDMAN

Wellesley College

NORMAN A. GRAEBNER

University of Virginia, Emeritus

KENNETH W. GRUNDY

Case Western Reserve University

OSCAR HANDLIN

Harvard University, Emeritus

WILLIAM A. JOSEPH

Wellesley College

RICHARD H. LEACH

Duke University

RAJAN MENON

Lehigh University

AUGUSTUS RICHARD NORTON

Boston University

JAN S. PRYBYLA

Pennsylvania State University

A. L. ROWSE

All Souls College, Oxford, Emeritus

ALVIN Z. RUBINSTEIN

University of Pennsylvania

AARON SEGAL

University of Texas

VACLAV SMIL

University of Manitoba

RICHARD F. STAAR

Hoover Institution

ARTURO VALENZUELA

Georgetown University

JEFFREY A. WINTERS

Northwestern University

## President and Publisher

DANIEL MARK REDMOND

DANIEL G. REDMOND

Editor and Publisher, 1943-1955

DANIEL G. REDMOND, JR.

Publisher, 1955-1988

## COMING IN SEPTEMBER:

### China

China as an economic and geopolitical powerhouse is the focus of our September issue, which will include a look at the underside of China's economic development and assess whether China is the world's newest superpower—and whether it is America's newest enemy. Topics scheduled to appear include:

#### Is China a Great Power?

Samuel Kim, Columbia University

#### Building a Better Enemy: The United States and China

David Shambaugh, George Washington University

#### Deng's Legacy: A Critique

Maurice Meisner, University of Wisconsin, Madison

#### Muslim Separatism in Xinjiang

Dru Gladney, East-West Center, University of Hawaii

#### China and the Rule of Law

James Feinerman, Georgetown University

#### The Chinese Military: A Serious Threat?

Paul Godwin, National Defense University

#### Corruption in China

Michael Johnston, Colgate University

#### China and the World Trade Organization

Peter Morici, University of Maryland

#### Macao: The Other Transition

Jonathan Porter, University of New Mexico

---

### COMMENTS ON THIS MONTH'S ISSUE?

Write the editor at:

[chistory@aol.com](mailto:chistory@aol.com)

VISIT CURRENT HISTORY ON THE WEB AT:

<http://www.currenthistory.com>

Current History (ISSN 0011-3530) is published monthly (except June, July, and August) by Current History, Inc., 4225 Main Street, Philadelphia, PA 19127. Copyright © 1997 by Current History, Inc. Current History® and History in the Making® are registered trademarks. Periodicals postage paid at Phila., PA, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Current History, 4225 Main Street, Philadelphia, PA 19127. Annual subscription rate: \$32.00. Foreign: \$38.75; Canada: \$39.75 (GST included). Canadian BN #13244 6592 RT. Indexed in *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, *The Abridged Reader's Guide*, *Book Review Index (BRI)*, *ABC POL SCI*, *PAIS*, *SSCI*, *Current Contents*, *Historical Abstracts*, *Academic Index*, *Magazine Index*, *Magazine Articles Summaries*, and *America: History and Life*. Indexed on-line by *DIALOG*, *BRS*, and *Information Access Magazine Index*. Microfilm: University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI. Requests to photocopy should be sent directly to Current History. No responsibility is assumed for the return of unsolicited manuscripts. Book reviews will be considered if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

PUBLICITY: Herman DeJong, (215) 482-7514, (215) 483-7091 (fax).

ADVERTISING SALES: Kalish, Quigley & Rosen, Inc., 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY, 10019, (212) 399-9500, (212) 265-0986 (fax).

Printed in the United States.

# CURRENT HISTORY

May 1997

Vol. 96, No. 610

"Understanding little of what is happening on the ground, Europeans and Americans have a tendency to simplify, globalize, and overlook the 'details'. . . The Great Lakes crisis and the Zairian civil war into which it developed are perfect illustrations of the fact that, for better or worse, Africa is now an independent historical actor. Recognizing this will have to be the first step in any attempt at conflict resolution in the future."

## The Great Lakes Crisis

GÉRARD PRUNIER

MAY 31 1997

**T**he crisis in the Great Lakes region of Africa that began in late August 1996 has moved from one surprising development to another. First identified as a local conflict in eastern Zaire, it soon developed larger dimensions when it became obvious that both the Rwandan and Burundian governments were involved. The scope was broadened even further with Uganda's entry in November, and it finally rose to the rank of a major international crisis when Zaire itself looked increasingly on the brink of collapse as rebel armies pushed deeper and deeper into its territory. To understand these related but chaotic events as parts of a single picture, we have to start with the site where the fuse was lit.

### THE GATHERING STORM

If we try to capture the entire Great Lakes area (Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, western Tanzania, and North and South Kivu provinces in Zaire) at a glance in mid-1996, we have a picture of extremes. Uganda was by far the most peaceful and prosperous country in the area. After 20 years of almost constant unrest between 1966 and 1986, it had been living for the last 10 years under a stable but authoritarian government. This government was democratically confirmed in a free and fair presidential election in May 1996 that the incumbent,

Yoweri Museveni, won with more than 70 percent of the vote. The economy was on the mend, boasting a robust 7 percent growth rate over the previous five or six years.

But Uganda was plagued by two guerrilla movements in its economically weak and ethnically heterogeneous northern region. One, the West Nile Bank Liberation Front, was linked to remnants of the Idi Amin regime. The other, the Lord's Resistance Army, was composed of adherents of the Holy Spirit Movement, a millenarian group of mainly Acholi tribesmen. Both were armed and supplied by the Sudanese government in retaliation for the help Museveni provided to the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army. Uganda's two guerrilla movements, however, were weak and operated in areas of the country that were too peripheral to represent a real threat to the regime.

Rwanda in mid-1996 presented a very different picture. Traumatized by the 1994 genocide in which 800,000 Tutsi and liberal Hutu had been slaughtered, the country was staggering back to its knees. The economy was in ruins, the mostly Tutsi government was not trusted by the Hutu majority, and the new Tutsi masters were ill at ease ruling a population they knew had not entirely turned its back on the perpetrators of the genocide. Even the moderate Hutu government ministers, heirs to the former opposition parties of the late President Juvénal Habyarimana's government, were uneasy because Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu and Interior Minister Seth Sendashonga had been forced to

GÉRARD PRUNIER is a senior researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris. His most recent book is *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, 2d ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).



resign in August 1995, leaving the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) regime in which they served ethnically and politically isolated. Last, over 2 million hostile refugees were camped on the borders, with those in Zaire counting among their numbers 50,000 soldiers of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR); intelligence sources indicated that these soldiers were in the process of rearming and that an attack on Rwanda was imminent.

Burundi was in an even worse situation. The country had been in a state of permanent unrest since the murder of democratically elected President Melchior Ndadaye in October 1993. In September 1994 a power-sharing agreement was brokered between the Tutsi-dominated Union for National Progress (UPRONA) opposition and the Hutu majority-supported Democratic Front of Burundi (FRODEBU) government. But the agreement was eroded by the constant sniping of Tutsi extremists, who branded Tutsi moderate Prime Minister Anatole Kanyenkiko a sell-out and eventually forced him to resign. Former FRODEBU Interior Minister Leonard Nyangoma had gone into exile and created a political movement, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), whose armed branch, the Democratic Defense Front (FDD), started guerrilla warfare operations in northern Burundi from its rear bases in the Zairian province of South Kivu.

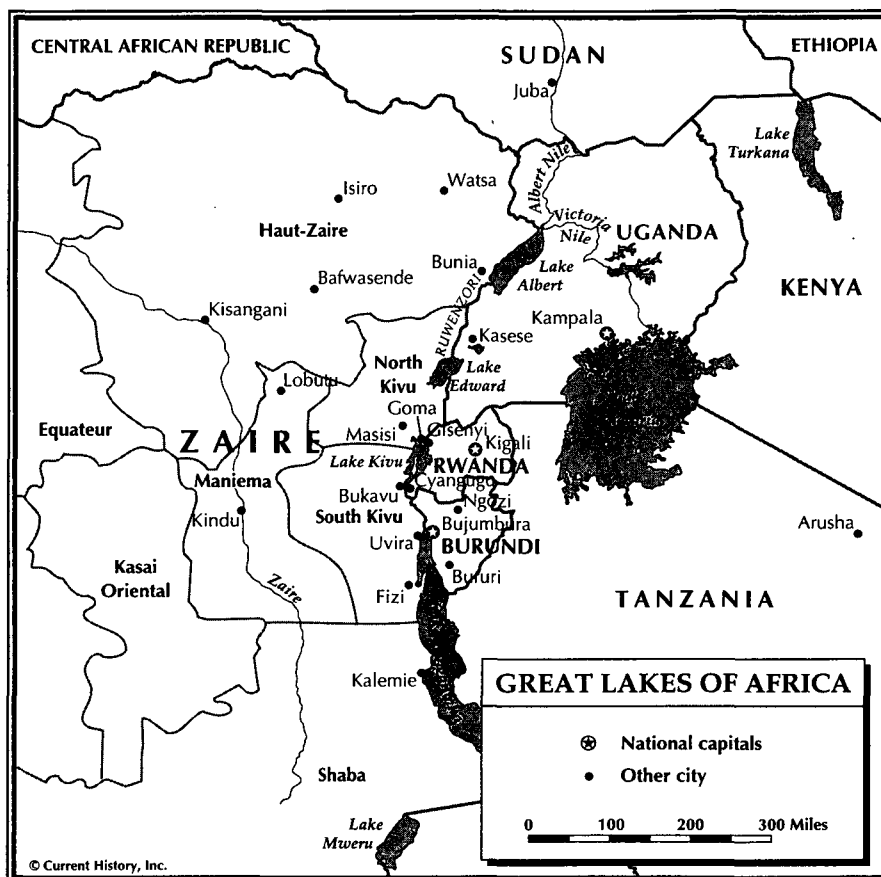
Late 1995 and early 1996 saw intensified fighting and a growing civilian death toll. With the Rwandan genocide still fresh in everybody's memory, both the Burundian Tutsi and the international community feared a new catastrophe. Caught

between mounting FDD guerrilla violence and increasingly savage repression by the Tutsi-dominated army, FRODEBU constitutional President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya became practically powerless. He was finally removed in July 1996 by a bloodless army coup that returned to power former President Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi and the losing candidate in the June 1993 elections.

The situation had gotten so out of hand that Buyoya, a moderate, could not stop the army killings; at the same time, Hutu support for the rebels kept increasing. When Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania imposed an economic blockade on Burundi to "punish"

Buyoya for having taken power from an elected if hapless government, the FDD stepped up its attacks. The capital city of Bujumbura came under direct threat, and it looked as if the genocide many had feared might actually happen.

But the final explosion did not come from these conflict areas; it came instead from Zaire. Zaire was host to armed and politically active refugees



and guerrillas from Rwanda and Burundi and also a hotbed of violent political problems of its own. These problems were not new. The Zairian regime was largely a product of the cold war. General Mobutu Sese Seko had been helped into power by the West during the civil war in the early 1960s because he was considered the only strong and unequivocally pro-Western contender in the conflict. His enemies were either communist-supported or potentially weak secessionists. But after almost 30 years of despotic and corrupt rule, Mobutu was finally challenged in the late 1980s as the communist threat vanished from the international scene.

The convening of a national conference put the country's politics in a state of permanent crisis by early 1991. Mobutu used every available means—from corruption to violence—to shore up his declining dictatorship, and the opposition appeared too weak and divided to offer a credible alternative. One interesting but dangerous aspect of the national conference was its willingness, after 30 years of enforced silence, to consider any political or social problem in the country. Given the ethnic rivalries in some areas of Zaire, particularly in North and South Kivu provinces, this was highly explosive. National conference delegates from Kivu fought each other in Kinshasa according to complex and shifting patterns of ethnic rivalries, but they all agreed on one point: Kivu's Kinyarwanda speakers were to be politically eliminated and possibly forced back physically into Rwanda.

There were many layers of Rwandan immigration in eastern Zaire, especially in North Kivu. The first group of Rwandans had arrived there probably over 200 years ago. These were both Tutsi and Hutu. Many—mostly Hutu—were later “imported” by the Belgians, who were short of manpower in the Congo during the colonial years while their mandate territory of Ruanda-Urundi was overpopulated.<sup>1</sup> A third and purely Tutsi layer was made up of refugees who had fled the 1959 to 1963 massacres and the imposition of a Hutu ethnic state at the time of Rwanda's independence in 1962. And a fourth and exclusively Hutu group had arrived in August 1994, fleeing the RPF takeover in Rwanda.

Except for the latest arrivals, who were armed and in a very peculiar state, the other groups in Kivu had been intermarrying for years, and it was often difficult to tell clearly which group an individual belonged to. Nevertheless, because of economic envy (the Banyarwanda, or Rwandan community, had done very well for itself in Kivu), the national conference delegates decided to apply selectively an already unjust and contradictory set of citizenship laws. The net result was that the Ban-

yarwanda in Kivu were progressively disenfranchised politically. President Mobutu, who had used the Banyarwanda before as local allies against a hostile local populace (this was another cause of Kivu hostility), was happy to deflect antigovernment sentiment toward another target and supported the anti-Banyarwanda movement.

When local tribes arranged to have people from other parts of the country transferred out of Kivu so that they could gain control of the police and army units, things started to turn ugly. By early 1993 militia groups were killing Banyarwanda in North Kivu. Previously, both Hutu and Tutsi in Kivu had joined to resist local pressure against them; now, with the civil war in Rwanda in full swing, the two elements of the Banyarwanda community turned against each other.

North Kivu became the scene of a three-way war in 1993 between Tutsi, Hutu, and *autochtones*, or local tribes. The arrival of armed and militantly anti-Tutsi refugees from Rwanda in mid-1994 did not improve matters. Soon North Kivu underwent an ethnic cleansing that left thousands of Tutsi dead and forced the survivors to flee to Rwanda, where the Tutsi-led RPF had just taken power.

In South Kivu the situation had been slightly better. National conference delegates from this province had also decided to marginalize the Banyarwanda politically, but in South Kivu there was no dichotomy between Tutsi and Hutu.<sup>2</sup> The local Banyarwanda were called “Banyamulenge,” from the name of the area in which they had settled. They were mostly Tutsi who had come to South Kivu in the early nineteenth century after losing in intra-Tutsi feudal wars in Rwanda. The few Hutu clients who had come with their Tutsi patrons had been “Tutsified” over the years and the group was homogeneous. In 1993 and 1994 the Banyamulenge watched with trepidation the fate of their North Kivu cousins. By mid-1996, when they began to be harassed by the local “Zairian” authorities who, as in North Kivu, had been progressively taken over by *autochtones*, they knew that the time to act had come. Unlike the North Kivu Tutsi, who had been attacked when Rwanda was at war and thus unable to help, they had the possibility of recourse in Kigali.

## GENERAL KAGAME'S WAR

If the catalyst of the conflict was local—the persecution of the Banyamulenge by a Kinshasa-supported South Kivu tribal coalition—the reasons why it broke out, and especially why it broke out on such a large scale, involved the entire region. And

<sup>1</sup>Rwanda and Burundi were parts of former German East Africa; they were conquered by the Belgian army in 1916 and later given to Brussels as mandate territories by the League of Nations.

<sup>2</sup>Contrary to a commonly held belief, Hutu and Tutsi are not tribes. They are two social divisions of the Barundi and Banyarwanda tribes who may have had a different racial origin in the distant past but who have lived together, spoken the same language, and intermarried for hundreds of years. Their social conflicts existed before colonization but had never reached the level of open and massive violence that developed in the 1960s and after.

when the RPF regime in Kigali finally decided to act as the Banyamulenge's godfather, it was because it had serious concerns that went far beyond the fate of the embattled South Kivu minority.

The first, of course, was the threat posed by the guerrillas coming from Zaire to kill and plant land mines on the Rwandan side of the border. Mobutu made no effort to restrain them because of his dislike of the new regime in Rwanda, which he judged to be obedient to Museveni's Uganda. In any case, given the progressive disintegration of the Zairian Armed Forces (FAZ) and the civilian administration since 1991, it is not even certain that he could have done anything to stop the former FAR desperadoes had he wanted to.

Using money they had taken with them when they had fled Rwanda in 1994, the former FAR and the political leadership responsible for the genocide had been buying weapons on the international market, especially from China. Their cross-border raids had intensified during late 1995 and early 1996 and were posing a serious security threat in such a small country as Rwanda. In addition, these attacks caused violent bouts of Rwandan army repression, which usually targeted Hutu peasants, thus worsening the already poor political climate in the country. For several months General Paul Kagame—the vice president, minister of defense, and real master of Rwanda—had been making threatening noises about the presence of the refugee camps in Kivu, complaining that the international community was unable to curb the military activities based there. His problem was that sending the Rwandan army across the border to attack the camps would have been a violation of international law and very poor public relations, since the former FAR fighters were hiding among genuine refugees who would have suffered massively from the attacks.

Apart from this problem General Kagame had to worry about Burundi. The economic embargo imposed on Burundi after the Buyoya coup was biting only one way. The restrictions on imports affected the Burundian army but for obvious reasons did not touch Leonard Nyangoma's Hutu guerrillas, who were operating out of Zaire. The result was catastrophic for the Tutsi forces.

Here there were two dangers for the RPF. If the Tutsi regime in Burundi were overthrown, the

Rwandan guerrillas would acquire an extremely threatening base on Rwanda's southern border (for the last 18 months ex-FAR forces had been operating jointly with the FDD against the Burundian regular army). It was also likely that killings on a quasi-genocidal scale would break out against the Tutsi minority. Buyoya, who was perceived by Tutsi extremists as a "dove," would be swept out of office and replaced, most likely by his cousin, Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, who was considered a hard-liner.<sup>3</sup> It was well known that Bagaza believed that if there were an anti-Tutsi genocide, the situation would be militarily untenable and that the biological survival of the group could only be ensured by a mass exodus; Rwanda was the only country where the Tutsi could expect to be welcomed.

For the Rwandan regime this was not an attractive proposition. After the Rwandan genocide about 80 percent of the country's Tutsi population was made up of former exiles who had left Rwanda in their early childhood or had been born abroad. Since Tutsi dwellings had been destroyed together with the dwellers, these returnees occupied the houses of the Hutu refugees who had fled to Zaire and Tanzania after the genocide, and any return of these refugees was likely to cause thorny problems of house and land occupation in an already overpopulated country. Having half a million or more Tutsi refugees arriving suddenly from Burundi was the last thing Kagame needed. Thus the survival of the Tutsi regime in Burundi was not only a question of group solidarity, but a major question of self-interest for Rwanda's government. And with some luck, it appeared the Banyamulenge could provide a solution to all the problems facing the RPF regime.

### KABILA'S SECOND COMING

The final element that tied together the whole bundle of complexities was the political resurrection of Laurent-Désiré Kabila. Kabila, a Muluba from Zaire's mineral-rich Shaba province (the former secessionist Katanga), had been one of the main actors in the 1964 to 1965 communist-backed insurrection against the Leopoldville—now Kinshasa—government. He had later disappeared from sight and retreated to his microsecessionist enclave near Lake Tanganyika, where he made a living from gold smuggling. He alternately fought and collaborated with local FAZ units, and although totally absent from the national scene in Zaire (he had not even tried to go to the national conference in 1991), he was well-known locally in the Uvira-Fizi-Kâlemie area.

<sup>3</sup>President between 1976 and 1987, Bagaza is a military man who comes from the same southern area of Burundi (Bururi) that all presidents have come from for the last 30 years, with the brief exception of Melchior Ndadaye.

The young Banyamulenge boys who were chafing at the bit and asking General Kagame for permission to go home and fight were both a resource and an embarrassment for the RPF regime.<sup>4</sup> They were in a position to perform all the cleaning-up tasks that would have served Kigali well. Although technically Zairians, they were bound to be perceived first as Banyarwanda. Using Kabila as a form of local cover could solve the problem. Thus, almost as soon as the Banyamulenge fighting broke out in late August and early September 1996, Kabila was propelled forward and helped in recruiting a number of local Zairian autochtones. Many of these were Bashi, members of a tribe living around Bukavu that had serious problems with the government in Kinshasa.

The Banyamulenge guerrillas were infiltrated back into Zaire from Rwanda to aid their brethren in the hills above Uvira. Fighting had already begun there and several dozens, possibly hundreds, of Banyamulenge civilians had been killed. The young men trained by the RPF did a quick clean job, hitting both the local FAZ units that were taking part in the pogroms and the Babembe militias the FAZ was in the process of arming. By early October 1996 everything was over. Then the Banyamulenge switched targets and attacked the Burundian refugee camps between Uvira and Bukavu. Kabila's men went into action with them. The attacks were ruthless, aiming in some cases at hospitals where patients were killed in their beds. The message was clear and the Burundian refugees scattered.

About 60,000 of the refugees were caught by the Banyamulenge and taken to the border under armed escort. They were picked up by the Burundian army on the other side for "clearing." A percentage were killed outright and the rest put in concentration camps. The remaining refugees—over 100,000—moved deeper into Zaire, toward Lobutu. The FDD guerrillas retreated. They crossed the border and fighting immediately escalated in northern Burundi in the provinces of Cibitoke, Ngozi, and Kayanza. The aim of the guerrillas was obviously to cross Burundi in order to escape eastward into Tanzania, where they hoped to establish new rear bases. The Burundian army tried to inter-

cept them, and there were heavy casualties among the civilian population caught in the cross fire.

It took the combined Banyamulenge and Kabila forces fewer than 10 days to completely eradicate the Burundian refugee camps. As a next step, they moved against the Rwandan refugee camps that were located in the same area and all the way up the western shore of Lake Kivu. Synchronizing their actions with these strikes, mysterious "armed men" began attacking the Rwandan refugee camps closest to the border in North Kivu (Katale and Kahindo).

Contrary to what was written later, these ghostly attackers were not the Banyamulenge, who were then too busy in South Kivu, but a mixture of Masisi Tutsi from North Kivu—who had survived the massacres of the previous year, run away to Rwanda, and had been rearmed by the RPF—and autochtones tribes (Bahunde, Banyanga) who had been fighting the Rwandan Hutu refugees encroaching on their land. Although these very same Bahunde and

Banyanga had been among the killers of Tutsi the year before, the fact that they had now switched sides and were attacking the refugees was enough to earn them the support of Kigali. Provided with heavy machine guns and light artillery by the Rwandan army and supported by artillery fire from the Rwandan side of the border, they first attacked the outlying camps, then occupied Goma and herded the fleeing refugees into Mugunga camp. The fighting then paused to give Kabila and an advance party of Banyamulenge time to

come up the western shore of Lake Kivu and join their allies in the north.

When they arrived in November they attacked Mugunga with rear echelon support from the Rwandan army. Mugunga cracked in less than 24 hours, showing that for all its rearming FAR had not improved its fighting capacity much since 1994. As for the FAZ forces, they ran away—as they had done everywhere since the beginning of the clashes more than two months before. The Kabila/Banyamulenge/North Kivu militia attack on Mugunga yielded an unexpected result: about two-thirds of the refugees suddenly regrouped and crossed into Rwanda en masse. The move was so unexpected that no effort was made to stop them, even to count or register them.

This sudden exodus was the product of a triple and contradictory set of circumstances. First, the cadres of the former Rwandan regime who had been intimidating the refugees and preventing them

---

*If the catalyst of the conflict was local . . . the reasons why it broke out . . . involved the entire region.*

---

<sup>4</sup>These fighters had joined the RPF during the war or even after, knowing that military experience would one day be useful at home.



from going home—telling them that the Tutsi would kill them—had fled deeper into Zaire, leaving the refugees to decide for themselves. There was also a fear that if they stayed in Zaire they would be killed by the attackers; many had been shot outright and it was feared that they would all be liquidated if they stayed. Because a large number of the refugees had taken part in the 1994 genocide, they were familiar with the concept of mass killing. They hoped that by crossing the border they would become internationally more visible and therefore less vulnerable. And then—but this became clear only about two months later—it seems that a number of the perpetrators of the genocide calculated that the confusion of 600,000 people stampeding home would give them sufficient cover to reenter Rwanda without being detected.

The sudden rush home of over 60 percent of the Rwandan refugees had a major international impact. For six weeks France had been insisting that it was necessary to intervene in Kivu to help the refugees, who were being assaulted and cut off from humanitarian aid. The international response had been sluggish. But by early November a number of countries, including Spain, Italy, and Great Britain, had finally lined up behind the French proposal.

The United States, still smarting from the Somali disaster of 1993, was markedly reluctant. Part of its reluctance also came from a suspicion that the French proposal was less than candid, hiding plans of military neutralization, if not outright reconquest, of Kivu province. Paris was panicked at the idea that the Zairian regime was about to collapse, with catastrophic results for the so-called *pré carré*, the francophone “protected domain” in Africa. In French government circles the Banyamulenge/Kabila/Rwandan forces on the attack in Kivu were often described as agents of Washington, intent on undermining French influence on the continent. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni was supposed to be the hidden coordinator of this grand strategy. Just a few hours before the Rwandan refugees started returning home, United States President Bill Clinton finally agreed to send American troops into Kivu. The exodus gave everybody second thoughts, and after a period of confused meetings the entire proposal was quietly folded up.

#### FOUR CONFLICTS IN ONE

After the exodus the entire situation started to shift. At first Kabila had been a diplomatic and military tool of Kigali, and the war had been motivated largely by factors relating to the situations in

Burundi and Rwanda. But Kagame had reached all his objectives in less than three months, and the dynamics of the conflict kept moving beyond what had initially been envisioned.

Uganda, which some had considered the hidden hand behind the entire operation, came unexpectedly under attack from Zairian territory on November 14, 1996, exactly when the Rwandan refugees were pouring back home. At the same time, Kabila began to feel that the ease with which he had won his first victories had created new prospects for him. Zaire, however, which had been rotting at the core for a decade, started to fall apart even before Kabila's men came to attack. Meanwhile, the domestic situations in both Rwanda and Burundi began to get worse. The result was to create not one but four different conflicts that should be looked at separately although they interconnect in many ways.

The first conflict is the continuation of the Burundi civil war that started in October 1993. Eliminating Leonard Nyangoma's rear bases in South Kivu was not enough to crush the FDD—in fact it was spurred into action. Between July and October 1996, the FDD had believed that its increased military pressure on Bujumbura was about to bring political dividends. President Buyoya had begun to talk about negotiating, a very dangerous move for him with Jean-Baptiste Bagaza and other extremists breathing down his neck. The embargo seemed to be working in pushing negotiations. By mid-to-late October, everything had changed.

After the military disaster in Uvira, Nyangoma fled to Tanzania, where former President Julius Nyerere, who was at the center of the diplomatic move to create the embargo and who had been pushing for negotiations, received him. But when Buyoya was asked to come to Nyerere's home village for a heart-to-heart talk, he said that he had changed his mind and would not negotiate after all. A few weeks later he arrested Bagaza and several other Tutsi extremist leaders, thus gaining a wider margin for maneuver. Nyangoma had no choice but to step up military operations. Unable to control the new surge of violence, the Burundian army started rounding up civilians in the northern provinces. By late February 1997, over 200,000 peasants had been “regrouped” in what were, in everything but name, concentration camps.

The second conflict was a renewal of civil strife in Rwanda. When General Kagame destroyed the refugee camps in Kivu and forced their inhabitants back home, he had removed in one fell swoop an obvious external danger. But by early January 1997 it became obvious that he had traded it for a more



insidious form of violence. Among the returnees were a number of former soldiers and militant civilian *interhamwe*, members of the militia created in 1991 by the Habyarimana regime. The *interhamwe* had been at the heart of the system that had organized the 1994 genocide and had left behind arms caches when they fled to Zaire. Given the lack of sympathy Hutu peasants felt toward the new Tutsi-led regime, the militant returnees could count on the neutrality if not the passive cooperation of a majority of the rural population.

A spate of killings in January and February, targeting, among others, European expatriates—including aid workers and one priest—who were believed to be aiding the regime, led to violent reprisals by the army. The government was still in control but the killings were taking place in broad daylight, only a few miles from Kigali. In many rural areas Tutsi survivors of the genocide, swamped by returnees among whom they could recognize several of the 1994 killers, started to panic and asked the government to regroup them under army protection. Some observers thought they could diagnose a progressive “Burundization” of the situation.

Uganda was the center of the third conflict. For several years the Sudanese government had been supporting the West Nile Bank Liberation Front and the Lord’s Liberation Army guerrillas. From 1993 onward, when the Sudanese army offensive had reached its southern borders, part of this support was rechanneled through the Equateur and Haut Zaire provinces of Zaire.

A more coordinated form of cooperation between Khartoum and Kinshasa, based on their common enmity toward Museveni, led the two governments to use the Bunia landing strip to bring in supplies. The area around Bunia offered potentially useful resources to Sudanese military intelligence operating out of Juba; *tabliq* activists had moved there after suffering a military defeat in Uganda in April 1996.<sup>5</sup> The Sudanese went to work, making the *tabliq* col-

laborate with Bakonjo elements from the Ruwenzori area who lived nearby and with a number of Rwandan Hutu *interhamwe* militants from North Kivu.<sup>6</sup>

The resulting coalition, the Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF), launched its attacks against Uganda in the Kasese area. Since mid-November the ADF has kept up a regular stream of hit-and-run operations from Zaire and from the heavily wooded slopes of Mount Ruwenzori, on the border between the two countries. To try to cut it off from its rear bases the Ugandan army penetrated into Zaire, often collaborating with Kabila’s men, who were by then making their way northward, chasing armed Hutu “refugees” as they went.

In Zaire itself Laurent-Désiré Kabila had begun to move into a larger political and military frame. Since he had started to wage war with only about 1,000 men, he had soon needed to recruit more. He did this locally and by integrating a large number of Zairians living in the East African diaspora. This in itself was an encouraging political sign. The man who had been denounced by the Zairian media as a “stooge of foreigners” was now increasingly considered an alternative to the decaying Mobutu dictatorship. By early March 1997 he had made contact with important Belgian mining interests who seemed interested by his potential. This is why one can speak of a fourth conflict, since the military operations that were to take Kabila’s forces from the extreme northeast (Watsa, Bafwasende, Isiro) to the edge of Shaba in the south (Kalemie), and to the occupation of the provincial capital of Kisangani, were now the beginning of a new conflict as much as the end of the previous one.

## OVERLOOKING THE DETAILS

UN efforts to deal with the Great Lakes crisis as a single entity were misguided, the product of a certain Western attitude that is mainly attentive to the international great powers’ frames of reference and that tends to downplay the local roots of conflict. Understanding little of what is happening on the ground, Europeans and Americans have a tendency to simplify, globalize, and overlook the “details.” This is exactly the attitude that presided over the clumsy “peace attempts” in Somalia between 1992 and 1995. The Great Lakes crisis and the Zairian civil war into which it developed are perfect illustrations of the fact that, for better or for worse, Africa is now an independent historical actor. Recognizing this will have to be the first step in any attempt at conflict resolution in the future. ■

<sup>5</sup>The *tabliq* are a Muslim sect originating in Pakistan that has proselytized in East Africa. Normally it is a pietist rather than an activist group but its Ugandan branch has turned violent in the 1990s, occupying mosques and killing “bad” imams. The *tabliq* started a guerrilla group in Bunyoro district in early 1996, were attacked by the Ugandan army in April and May of that year, and then took refuge in eastern Zaire.

<sup>6</sup>The Bakonjo are an ethnic group that has fought every government in Uganda since 1952 for greater autonomy.

"The mysteries surrounding the rebellion [in Zaire] remain, no doubt intentionally. Little is known about who is actually fighting or what authority [guerrilla leader Laurent] Kabila really has. Are the fighters Ugandan? Rwandan? Angolan? Zairian? Who is pulling strings? Is Kabila 'Zairianizing' the rebellion as it sweeps through the country, or simply winning the battle of appearances necessary for popular support?"

## Endgame in Zaire

PETER ROSENBLUM

Seven years after President Mobutu Sese Seko grudgingly gave in to calls for a democratic transition in Zaire, rebels have swept through the country and exposed that transition's hollowness. What was initially an unlikely group to take over a state has grown in stature as it has progressed in battle, benefiting not only from Rwandan, Ugandan, and possibly Angolan support, but from the depredations of the Zairian armed forces and the wishful thinking of the population. Moreover, Mobutu's own strategy for holding power has turned against him. Consciously fomented rivalries among the political and military elites, which served to prevent challenges to his power, now prevent these elites from unifying in their own self-interest. The national army, which Mobutu undermined to prevent the kind of coup that first brought him to power, is proving in battle the success of his efforts. Only civil society has flourished, though its accomplishments have been overlooked in the turmoil.

Ironically, the conflict that set the rebellion in motion was local and not unlike the myriad other disputes that might arise in a country with a contracting economy and more than 400 ethnic groups. It involved a struggle for political and economic control in and around the town of Uvira, across Lake Tanganyika from Burundi's capital city of Bujumbura.

After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the breakdown of order in Burundi that began in 1993, more than 1 million, primarily Hutu, refugees settled along the eastern border of Zaire, adding to the hardship of the local population and creating an

uncertainty that helped rekindle dormant feuds. There was a strong consensus in Zaire that the refugees should be sent home. At the same time, many Zairians in the east sympathized with the Hutu populations in Rwanda and Burundi that had long been dominated by Tutsis. Local politicians from Uvira took advantage of the two sentiments to settle past scores with the Banyamulenge, a Tutsi community firmly anchored in the region for a century or more. "Curiously," as Zairians like to say when suggesting a conspiracy, parliamentary resolutions calling for the expulsion of refugees began to refer to the Banyamulenge as well.

Uncertainty in the face of eventual democratic elections was another cause of conflict. The citizenship of ethnic Rwandans—Hutus and Tutsis living in Zaire and known as Banyarwanda—had been in doubt since a 1981 law requiring proof of ancestry back to the nineteenth century. In some parts of Kivu province the Banyarwanda represented a substantial majority of the population. If allowed to vote they would almost certainly seize power.

None of this should make any difference, since the 1981 law contravenes international law and the principles of the Organization of African States. But such legal niceties were lost in the clamor of politicians insisting on the right of sovereignty. Corruption and political instability also prevented the conflict over citizenship from being addressed in a legitimate forum, encouraging the search for alternative solutions, such as mass expulsion.

Violence against ethnic Rwandans—without distinction between Hutus and Tutsis—began in North Kivu. In the spring of 1993, Tutsis and Hutus had fought together against "indigenous" Hunde and Nyanga, who would later become members of the rebel coalition. Without resolving the underlying

---

PETER ROSENBLUM is projects director of the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School.

political issues, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local government officials succeeded in installing a fragile peace. But it came undone in 1995. Most people blamed the new Rwandan refugees, which was true in part, though not because of infiltration by *interhamwe* (Hutu militia from Rwanda) and former Rwandan army members but because of the glut of weapons and the general insecurity created by the refugee crisis. The Hutu combatants did join the fighting later, in early 1996, by which time the Hutu-Tutsi alliance had broken down and full-scale war had erupted.

Not surprisingly, the targeting of Tutsis in North Kivu province recalled the horrors of the genocide and elicited a strong response from Rwanda. High-ranking Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) officials were deeply upset and blamed the international community. One can imagine the frustration in Kigali in August and September 1996 when a similar pattern that targeted the Tutsis even more directly began to unfold in South Kivu. It was at this time that Zairian authorities stepped up their intimidation of Banyamulenge, threatening the entire community with expulsion. Meanwhile, the international community did nothing.

The events in North and South Kivu only explain the timing of the eventual attack that launched the rebellion. There were other factors, the most important of which were linked to Rwandan internal security. The security situation in western Rwanda had been decaying rapidly through the summer of 1996, apparently because of increased incursions from the refugee camps in the Goma area—only “apparently” because an unknown portion of the violence was linked to struggles within the RPF and among Tutsi returnees from different countries. Rwandan authorities had repeatedly warned the international community—indeed, Rwandan leader Paul Kagame had informed the United States directly of his intentions—that Rwanda would act against the camps if no other solution was found.

These factors converged in the attacks that began slowly in September and then turned into a lightning sweep from south to north along 300 miles of the eastern frontier of Zaire, beginning with the capture of Uvira on October 24, Bukavu on October 30, and Goma on November 1. To the unexpressed relief of the international community, the festering refugee problem was suddenly lanced. It was in no way a coincidence. At the very moment the international community appeared willing to intervene with a multinational force—but unwilling to disarm the Hutu combatants—the “rebels”

attacked Mugunga, the biggest remaining refugee camp and, during the week of November 10 to 17, unleashed the largest refugee repatriation in history. About 400,000 refugees walked home to Rwanda at that time. While 700,000 remained in worsening conditions, the momentum for international intervention quickly tapered off.

## KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

The rebel advances were not welcomed by the Zairian population; the Tutsi factor alone was enough to alienate most Zairians. In addition, the tepid international reaction to overt Rwandan intervention deeply offended Zairians; they felt their country had been reduced to a receptacle for unwanted refugees. Even people who had devoted their lives to fighting the Mobutu regime were upset by the stories of troops fleeing before the rebels.

Suddenly, the rebellion acquired a Zairian “leader,” Laurent-Désiré Kabila, a Muluba from northern Shaba province who had been largely invisible in recent years but whose name was known from previous rebellions. Kabila had fought with independence leader Patrice Lumumba and had joined in the Mulele rebellion in the mid-1960s. He had since lived an increasingly sedentary life with his fellow combatants near the southern tip of Kivu. There they engaged in gold trafficking and periodic armed forays that were rarely taken seriously. According to official accounts, Kabila joined the battle in Lemera, near Uvira on October 8. There he reportedly formed an alliance with the Banyamulenge. But there are no signs that he played a role in any of the field combat. His arrival was dismissed by most Zairians as a transparent effort by Rwanda and Uganda to give the rebellion a Zairian face. Motivated in part by Kabila’s deft maneuvering—but even more by fear of renewed military rampages and the nearly desperate hope for a “hero” to save them—Zairians began to mitigate their skepticism and hesitantly welcome Kabila.

The mysteries surrounding the rebellion remain, no doubt intentionally. Little is known about who is actually fighting or what authority Kabila really has. Are the fighters Ugandan? Rwandan? Angolan? Zairian? Who is pulling strings? Is Kabila “Zairianizing” the rebellion as it sweeps through the country, or simply winning the battle of appearances necessary for popular support? During a visit by this author to Shaba and Kinshasa over Christmas, Zairians asked these questions before dismissing Kabila as a puppet and speculating—hopefully—that the United States was the puppeteer. That at



least would alleviate the insult of a Rwandan invasion and return to their country the status of a major international prize.

One of the greatest mysteries about the rebellion is why it did not happen before. Predictions of sustained chaotic violence have been standard since the transition began in 1990. When it appeared to be spinning out of control in early 1993, the United States State Department projected a scenario of "Somalia and Liberia rolled into one, with vast potential for immense refugee flows, regional destabilization, and humanitarian disaster." But Zaire defied predictions then, just as it had in 1991, when many experts predicted starvation in Kinshasa after the army's pillaging of the modern economic sector and the wholesale withdrawal of foreign aid. The "spell" of nonviolence remained largely unbroken, and Zairians succeeded in muddling through the economic disaster.

This points to a dramatic resilience in Zairian society, and one that is not simply a passive phenomenon (as many political analysts claim, noting the ineffectiveness and disorder in the political opposition). Active resistance in Zaire has not been politically directed. It has come, rather, from civil society—the phenomenal informal economy, the activism of churches, and the burgeoning NGO sector composed of local human rights groups and development organizations—all of which play a part in mitigating the abuses of the state, mediating conflict, rendering services, and creating opportunities. As the country races toward a military solution and foreign powers concentrate on cease-fires and negotiated settlements, there is a tendency to forget the elements that have held society together. At this moment the worst threat to Zaire would be an agreement among those extremist, armed elements that disregarded the essential role of civil society.

### THE STATE'S COLLAPSE AND THE RISE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The last seven years have seen violent military rampages that have destroyed much of the modern business sector and threatened any economic accumulation. In 1994 the economy shrank 7.4 percent and inflation stood at 23,700 percent. The state mining sector has declined to 10 percent of its post-colonial output, and primary education and health care have dropped precipitously. According to a 1994 internal World Bank report, the economy had

contracted to its size in 1958 with a present population more than twice as large.

The political transition has been nearly a complete failure, ending where it began: with no effective national government independent of Mobutu's personal will. The period has seen four phases and more than a half-dozen governments. From 1990 to 1992, Mobutu sought to direct the process from above. In August 1992 he consented to the convening of the Sovereign National Conference, a broad-based assembly of nearly 3,000 participants intended to lay a course for Zaire's future. The exuberance of the conference, which effectively functioned from April 6 to December 6, 1992, gave way to resistance and struggle when Mobutu dismissed the government of Prime Minister Étienne Tshisekedi in January 1993. The resistance was worn down during the third phase, as Mobutu revived the discredited National Assembly and named his own government, establishing institutions "parallel" to those of the national conference.

---

*[Mobutu]  
appears intent  
on one last effort  
to divide his  
enemies and rise  
above the fray.*

---

The fourth phase began in early 1994, when the opposition consented to a merger of the parallel institutions. In the absence of concerted external pressure for change, the opposition compromised with the Mobutist forces—as it had in 1992 to obtain Mobutu's consent to the election of Tshisekedi. Now the opposition agreed to merge the National Assembly into the High Council of the Republic, creating an unwieldy transition parliament of 738 members, the majority of whom had been handpicked by Mobutu. The one major concession the opposition obtained was the right to name the prime minister; the regime's foes were counting on their own unity behind Tshisekedi. That unity broke down almost immediately and the prime minister was elected by parliamentary vote. Léon Kengo wa Dondo, a staple figure of the Mobutu regime and prime minister through much of the 1980s before he turned to the opposition, was elected prime minister by the transitional parliament on June 14, 1994, with 45 percent of the vote.

Prime Minister Kengo at first presented himself as a reformer, firmly in the opposition camp. Three times in the same speech in October 1994 he promised to resign if he was not able to fulfill the mandate of the transition, including reforming the armed forces, depoliticizing the territorial administration, and preparing for elections. None of these goals was achieved, but Kengo continued to resist every effort at his departure.

Meanwhile, the radical opposition, led by Tshisekedi, refused to cooperate with the government or play a constructive role in the transition parliament. His forces took the adage about "the enemy of my enemy" to new extremes, negotiating with some of Mobutu's closest allies in order to further weaken the prime minister. On several occasions in 1995 and 1996, it appeared that Mobutu would dismiss Kengo in favor of Tshisekedi. The result was simply to drive Kengo further into the Mobutist camp and prevent even the gentlest of reforms. Moreover, Tshisekedi's impetuous and unpredictable behavior, including long periods of silence during which he has refused to meet with other political figures or foreign diplomats, has alienated much of the intellectual class and most other opposition politicians. Although Tshisekedi remains popular—as evidenced by the reaction to his selection as prime minister in late March—the opposition itself is badly splintered and largely ineffectual. It remains reactive and without creativity or depth, guided by old-generation politicians who rarely leave the capital.

In contrast to this bleak picture is the explosive activity and institutional development in the non-governmental sector. Zairians have shown how international disengagement encourages self-sufficiency. Several credible new universities have been established in the past seven years; self-defense and subsistence communities have organized in urban areas, and human rights groups have sprung up across the country. These new organizations have learned to contest power and mediate conflict in creative ways that were unthinkable 10 years ago.

Foreign analysts usually accept President Mobutu's line that he initiated the democracy process. But they forget that he announced the transition to democracy in response to the "popular consultations" initiated in January 1990 in response to rising domestic and international pressure. At first they appeared to be an effort by Mobutu to circumvent that pressure. In the atmosphere of repression that existed, few observers expected anything to result from the "town meetings" and written submissions to the president, especially when it was learned that the consultations would be conducted by an old security chief, Mokolo wa Mpombo. The surprise came when the population took the president at more than his word, openly and dramatically criticizing every element of the regime. Mobutu tried to manage the process, but copies of submissions began to circulate inside and outside the country, preventing the president's backtracking.

The response made it seem as if there had been a sector of society lying in wait for the moment when it could leap forward and correct the failings of the regime. In fact, during the 1980s there had been considerable activity around churches, universities, and development organizations, primarily in Kivu, to work out a model of an alternative society. These associations provided the skill and the ideas that propelled civil society to the forefront of the national conference.

The development NGOs organized into regional councils and a national council in Kinshasa. Meanwhile, human rights groups sprang up, some organized around churches and others emerging from the development community. At first they followed the Western model of monitoring and reporting human rights abuses. Then, during the national conference, a number, like the Zairian Human Rights League, played an active role in convening support groups to help draft laws and propose resolutions. Human rights groups now include a vast range of organizations across the country, some of which have national scope and a professional staff, while others are grassroots, community-based organizations working on consumer issues, self-defense, and civic education.

The official role of civil society in the transition diminished significantly with the 1994 transition constitution, which presented the issues of the state as a "family affair," as the UN special rapporteur termed it, dividing institutions between the two political families: Mobutu's, which remained intact, and that of the opposition, which was fractured and unorganized at the local level. The effect was to cut the institutions off from their most legitimate source and further alienate them from the population.

## UNITE AND BE CONQUERED

The immediate effect of the war in eastern Zaire was to unite the opposition, civil society, and Mobutists in a nationalist and at times xenophobic fervor. The population turned its anger on Tutsis, the army generals, and the government of Prime Minister Kengo. Anyone suspected of having Tutsi ancestry was fair game for harassment and theft. Covetous employees targeted competitors with aquiline features. Kengo, whose major political liability through most of his career was his white father, was vilified for having a Tutsi mother.

In protests that shook Kinshasa in November and early December, students called for Kengo to resign and General Marc Mahele Lieko to lead the army. Mahele had a reputation as a professional sol-

dier in a field occupied by unqualified members of Mobutu's own clan. He is, however, no less a Mobutist, and played an active role in political repression as head of the strike force and intelligence arm of the military in the 1980s. But he earned popular respect when he represented the army before the national conference and promised to accept the will of the people. He is reported to have good relations with Tshisekedi, the opposition leader, whose house arrest he personally enforced in the late 1980s.

When the war broke out Mobutu was in Europe, where, on August 22, 1996, he underwent surgery for prostate cancer. Tshisekedi, who had not left Zaire since the transition began, broke his long-standing refusal to deal directly with Mobutu and left for France. He met with the ailing president on November 21 and announced that Mobutu had agreed to name him prime minister, a claim that recalled many other similar occasions. As before, the claim was immediately denied, and eventually proved untrue. Immediately after meeting with the president, however, Tshisekedi broke ranks with the government and much of popular opinion by calling for negotiations with Kabila.

Euphoria greeted Mobutu's return to Kinshasa on December 17, one of the few visits he has made to the capital since the transition began. While the public supported Mobutu's choice of Mahele to lead the army, the disappointment was palpable when he reappointed Kengo prime minister several days later. Though he has frustrated many in the opposition and beyond, Tshisekedi was probably the only choice that would have satisfied the calls for change.

The period leading up to the new year was uneventful. The rebels consolidated their positions around Goma and Bukavu without extending far into the interior. In fact, overreaching claims began to backfire and give the impression of failing. It was also unclear whether Kabila was supported by Uganda and Rwanda in pursuing his stated goal of overthrowing Mobutu, or whether they were simply interested in creating a buffer zone along their border. Many observers have questioned the rebels' push towards the north along the Ugandan border when a southward push into Shaba would have seemed strategically more effective. High-level visitors to Rwanda in December found RPF leaders consumed with the problem of the returning refugees and speculated that, for them, the work of the rebels had already been accomplished.

This apparently changed once Zaire announced the "massive, thunderous counteroffensive" in early January and began to concentrate arms and mercenaries in Kisangani. The regime was clearly pinning its hopes on support from France, which was also the major fear of Kabila's backers.

## OUTSIDE INTERESTS

Among the Western powers, and particularly the troika of France, Belgium, and the United States, only France was fully reconciled to Mobutu. There had been a hesitant shift from the early 1990s, when the troika was on the verge of freezing Mobutu's assets abroad and cutting him off entirely. In January 1993 French Ambassador Philippe Bernard was killed by Mobutist troops strafing the embassy, where Tshisekedi had recently passed. But the war in Rwanda eventually restored Mobutu's luster, and the new French ambassador was the first true throwback to the pre-1990 period. The views of the other two members of the troika had also evolved, but they maintained a distance from Mobutu. The president continued to suffer the status of pariah, as evidenced by the visa restrictions that prevented him and his entourage from traveling freely.

The French authorities saw the invasion as a foreign-backed threat to their influence, of which Mobutu and Kengo were the main defenders. They immediately treated it as an extension of the Anglo-American "plot" that had brought the Tutsis to power in Rwanda and was extending Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's reach to West Africa. French officials openly accused the United States of supporting the rebellion and said it was providing Kabila with advisers. The extent of United States-French animosity goes even further. A group of African leaders, including Museveni, South African President Nelson Mandela, Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, and the secretary general of the OAU, Salim Salim, met on December 17 to discuss the war. At the last minute Kengo canceled, denouncing the meeting as an Anglo-Saxon conspiracy. United States State Department sources said they believed Kengo's cancellation could be traced to a United States internal document that was leaked by the French.

But aside from bombastic statements suggesting their broader support, the French refused to back the Mobutu regime. Even French allies and old friends of Mobutu—including Morocco, Togo, and Chad—refused to provide overt aid to the regime. The mercenaries who were eventually hired



included three well-known Europeans, a Belgian and two Frenchmen, but appeared, in the end, to be composed primarily of Serbians.

The role of the United States has been harder to gauge. When the rebel attack first occurred, the United States claimed to be caught unawares. The claim seemed nearly inconceivable given the scale of the attack and the close relations between Rwanda and the United States. The casual and uncritical response of the United States embassy in Rwanda was interpreted to imply United States support for the attack.

In January, however, America's ambassador to Zaire, Daniel Simpson, went on the offensive, publicly denouncing the attack as a foreign invasion. As the mercenary buildup continued and reports of large numbers of Ugandan troops surfaced, the United States criticized all foreign intervention and presented a *démarche* to President Museveni. State Department officials complained privately that, despite appearances, they have little control over the Ugandan president.

The State Department has, in fact, been unable to develop a policy on the war. The United States eventually attempted to promote negotiations between Kabila and Mobutu's allies. But the awkward meetings in South Africa that began February 19 served only as a public relations coup for Kabila, who succeeded in presenting himself as a statesman by the side of President Mandela.

### MOBUTU'S LAST VICTORY?

The strategic city of Kisangani fell to the rebels on March 15, effectively ending the Zairian government's counteroffensive and eliminating any hope of military resistance. With the fall of Kisangani, Kabila and his advisers assumed a new, higher profile, inviting humanitarian groups to return to the region and hinting at a political program for the future, one in which Kabila would form a transition government that excluded political parties for at least one year.

In early April the rebels took the last bastion of income for the barons of the regime, the diamond-mining region of Kasai and the copper- and cobalt-rich province of Shaba. Mbuji-Maya, the capital of Kasai, fell to the rebels, as did Lubumbashi, the capital of Shaba. Meanwhile Mobutu made one last effort to divide his enemies and rise above the fray: he set the country's two most popular politicians in Kabila's path, both physically and figuratively, playing off regional and ethnic loyalties.

As expected, he named Étienne Tshisekedi prime minister to replace Kengo. At the same time, he reinstated Tshisekedi's greatest antagonist, Kyungu wa Kumwanza, the populist and xenophobic governor of Shaba, who had been responsible for instigating the mass expulsion of Kasaiens—people from Tshisekedi's home region—in 1993. The two figures command the support of mutually suspicious populations, both of which increasingly fear Kabila's long-term aspirations.

The tactic was successful. As the rebels continued their advance through Shaba and Kasai, an undercurrent of resistance and conflict emerged within the populations, inflamed by the treatment of local political heroes as well as reports of atrocities committed by the rebel troops in the east of the country. On arriving in Shaba's capital, Kabila displaced Kyungu and placed him under house arrest, setting off a torrent of open protest and criticism that, in turn, drew a muscled response from Kabila and his governor. As Kabila's forces moved into Tshisekedi's home region, Kabila pointedly avoided embracing the opposition leader and arrested one of Kasai's leading figures, the long-time head of the state diamond producer, MIBA. The result was to set off a backlash of support for one of the regime's oldest dinosaurs.

Mobutu's gambit was not, however, successful in preserving his own power in Kinshasa. The dying president failed to anticipate Tshisekedi's dramatic bid to assert independent authority as the opposition leader dissolved the parliament and invited Kabila to join his government. But before Tshisekedi could even take office, Mobutu displaced him again, declaring martial law and naming a military prime minister, General Likulia Bolongo. Kabila began his final "assault" on Kinshasa, where tensions continued to rise as soldiers streamed in from rebel territory and the unarmed opposition mounted a campaign against the military government.

Negotiations continue in South Africa; they are unlikely to yield results so long as Mobutu remains the focus of attention, which will change only if he dies or departs the country. The struggle between the armed and unarmed opposition is likely to increase if Kabila continues to reject the political opposition and the process elaborated by the national conference. Without a shared political vision for the country, the prospect of continued regional violence becomes more likely even after Kabila takes Kinshasa, a small consolation for the dying Mobutu, who has implicitly threatened during his 31 years in power, "*après moi, le déluge.*" ■

"French policymakers are committed to maintaining some type of special relationship with their francophone African counterparts. . . . [However,] French freedom of action is increasingly constrained by a variety of factors and developments: France's responsibilities and interests outside Africa, the evolving structure of the international system, declining military capabilities during a period of growing domestic constraints, and, most important, the emergence of new elites in francophone Africa less willing to accept the same ties enjoyed and permitted by their predecessors."

## France and the Great Game in Africa

PETER J. SCHRAEDER

France is the only former colonial power that has sought to maintain and expand its presence throughout Africa. Whether France has been led by the socialists of François Mitterrand or the more conservative partisans of Charles de Gaulle and Jacques Chirac, French policymakers consistently have claimed that historical links and geographical proximity justify placing francophone Africa within France's sphere of influence. The implicit assumption of what has been described as the French version of the Monroe Doctrine is that francophone Africa constitutes France's *domaine réservé* (natural preserve), and is therefore "off limits" to other great powers.<sup>1</sup>

But in the post-cold war era the concept of the *domaine réservé* is increasingly under attack by the very countries that French policies were designed to "protect." Criticism has emerged not only from a new generation of democratically elected African elites less enamored of their French counterparts but from traditional, often authoritarian allies who fear that a diminished France will be either unwilling or unable to maintain previous commitments.

---

PETER J. SCHRAEDER is an associate professor of political science at Loyola University Chicago. He is the author of *United States Foreign Policy toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis, and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). The research for this article was facilitated by a Fulbright grant to Senegal from October 1994 to August 1996.

---

<sup>1</sup>For critiques, see Guy Martin, "Continuity and Change in Franco-African Relations," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1 (March 1995); and Antoine Glaser and Stephen Smith, *L'Afrique sans Africains: le rêve blanc du continent noir* (Africa without Africans: The white dream for a black continent) (Paris: Stock, 1994).

Equally important, French support for the *domaine réservé* appears to be waning. The policymaking elite is preoccupied with the implications of European integration and NATO's enlargement. Meanwhile, the French public is beginning to question French financial commitments to Africa at a time of economic stagnation at home. The uglier side of this public shift is growing intolerance for African immigrants (whether legal or not). As President Jacques Chirac prepares to lead France into the twenty-first century, French foreign policy must adjust to an increasingly turbulent francophone Africa.

### MAKING AFRICA SAFE FOR FRANCE

A desire to reassert France's historical position as a great power drove French policy toward francophone Africa during the cold war. French policymakers sought to consolidate and promote the *rayonnement* (spread) of the most notable aspects of French culture, including the French language and intellectual traditions. Also referred to as the promotion of *la francophonie* (a greater French-speaking community), this policy is best represented by the biannual Franco-African summit attended by the leaders of France and francophone Africa. The summit has been described as the "centerpiece" of Franco-African cultural relations, primarily because it is seen as a "family" reunion designed to strengthen already close personal relationships between the French president and his African counterparts.

The promotion of French economic supremacy in francophone Africa served as the second most important objective of French foreign policy during

the cold war. The best example of this pursuit was the organization of 13 former French colonies and Equatorial Guinea into the franc zone. Created in 1947, the franc zone constitutes a supranational financial system in which France serves as a central bank and in which a common currency—the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc—is tied to the French franc and guaranteed by the French treasury. By wedding its fiscal policy to the franc zone, France has sought to preserve monetary stability throughout the region. French policymakers provided emergency credits, subsidized private investments to franc zone members, and offered tax breaks to French companies conducting business in the region.

The pursuit of regional security was an integral aspect of French cultural and economic policies during the cold war. A series of French administrations signed defense accords with their African counterparts, generously provided arms and military advisers for training purposes, and authorized interventions by French military forces to ensure stability and maintain the status quo. In this regard, one can argue that French policymakers sought to spread French culture with the same ideological fervor with which United States policymakers sought to prevent the spread of communism. Consequently, when francophone countries tried to renounce their special relationship with France, as Guinea did in 1958 when it voted against the creation of a revised French community of states, French retribution was swift: all aid to Guinea was abruptly cut off by an angry de Gaulle. But as long as these countries maintained close ties with France, even authoritarian leaders were unlikely to find themselves under heavy pressure from Paris to reform their governments.

The United States and the other major Western powers promoted the idea of France's special role in francophone Africa, commonly referred to as France's *chasse gardée* (exclusive hunting ground). A shared set of interests had developed around France's perceived role as a bulwark against communism in francophone Africa. However, as forcefully noted in the recently published memoirs of Jacques Foccart, the primary architect of the francophone structure under de Gaulle, the French placed the potential United States threat to francophone Africa on a par with that posed by the for-

mer Soviet Union, and in the extreme depicted the United States as the primary long-term threat to French interests.<sup>2</sup> Foccart even went so far as to decry Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko's close ties to Washington as breeding "Anglo-Saxon influence" in the largest country of francophone Africa, and therefore hastening a clear "victory" for the United States at the expense of France. Despite Foccart's characterization, Washington's explicit acceptance of the *chasse gardée* ensured that Zaire would remain the exception to the rule of United States–French cooperation in francophone Africa during the cold war.

### SECURITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND (PERHAPS) DEMOCRACY

A series of events immediately after the cold war highlighted pressures for change in France's carefully crafted francophone network. The emergence of democratic reform movements seeking an end to single-party rule heralded the beginning of a process that threatened the essence of the francophone structure: the potential replacement of staunchly pro-French, undemocratic elites with opposition candidates less enamored of France and more sympathetic to seeking closer ties with other great powers. To the surprise of many, President François Mitterrand publicly embraced these democratization movements in a much-quoted speech at the 1990 Franco-African summit held in La Baule, France, and warned his counterparts in francophone Africa that future French foreign aid would be contingent on their willingness to promote true democratic change. What became known as the La Baule Doctrine suggested that the promotion of democracy would become the new hallmark of French policy in francophone Africa.

The bold rhetoric of democratization was not matched by the reality of ongoing foreign aid programs designed to keep pro-French elites in power. In the case of Cameroon, French aid to the authoritarian regime of President Paul Biya expanded from \$159 million in 1990 to \$436 million in 1992—the year of the country's first multiparty presidential elections. The primary reason for the dramatic increases in French aid was to ensure Biya's victory, especially since the most popular opposition candidate was John Fru Ndi—an anglophone politician perceived as a threat to French interests in Cameroon.

Any misunderstandings generated by earlier French rhetoric were resolved at the 1992 Franco-African summit held in Libreville, Gabon. At this meeting, French Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy

<sup>2</sup>See Jacques Foccart, with Philippe Gaillard, *Foccart parle: entretiens avec Philippe Gaillard*, vol. 1 (Foccart speaks: Interviews with Philippe Gaillard) (Paris: Fayart, 1995).



privately stated that when confronted with the potentially conflicting goals of promoting democracy, ensuring development, and maintaining security, the leaders of francophone Africa were expected to adhere to the following order of priorities: above all, security, followed by development and, finally, democratization.

The intensification of a continentwide economic crisis also created pressure for change in France's economic relationship with francophone Africa. With many of their clients on the verge of financial bankruptcy, French policymakers initially decided to undertake an economic bailout that entailed massive increases in foreign aid. From 1990 to 1992, French aid exceeded \$8.2 billion—a \$2.1 billion increase over the previous three-year period. Once it became clear that the short-term bailouts were insufficient and that projected required aid levels were beyond France's fiscal capabilities, French policymakers took the extraordinary step in January 1994 of devaluing the previously sacred CFA franc by 50 percent. The decision sent shock waves throughout the CFA franc zone, which had never before suffered a devaluation. Most important, the move clearly signaled that France's commitment to la francophonie no longer took precedence over the pursuit of economic self-interest.

The emergence of new security challenges, such as the growing numbers of "collapsed states" beset by ethnic, religious, and political rivalries, has contributed to rising pressures for change in France's security relationship with francophone Africa. In the case of Rwanda, France took the lead in undertaking a series of military interventions between 1990 and 1994. The Mitterrand administration's decision to intervene was the latest manifestation of the long-term French goal of integrating the former Belgian colonies of the Great Lakes region into the French sphere of influence. These interventions also fostered one of the rare examples of popular outrage in France about policy toward francophone Africa when it was learned that the Mitterrand administration had provided the authoritarian Rwandan regime of Major General Juvénal Habyarimana with over \$160 million in economic aid and an untold amount of military aid from 1990 to 1994—in essence contributing to the genocide that unfolded in 1994.

France's attempt to rationalize military intervention in Rwanda as a humanitarian response to local suffering was dubious at best. In reality, the Mitterrand government sought to stem the invasion and steady advance beginning in October 1990 of the

Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a guerrilla army supported by Uganda and perceived by French policymakers as hostile to France and "under Anglo-Saxon influence." From the perspective of most French policymakers, the RPF's military victory in 1994 marked the first time that a francophone country had "fallen" to Anglo-Saxon influence. Some French policymakers considered Rwanda the first in a series of regional "dominoes" that could eventually lead to Anglo-Saxon domination of portions of Central Africa.

## **BUFFETED BY TURBULENCE**

Jacques Chirac's election as president of France in May 1995 coincided with an increasingly turbulent period in French foreign policy toward francophone Africa. The growing contradictions in French support for democratization were shown by the Chirac administration's response to a February 1996 military coup in Niger—the first against a democratically elected government in France's former colonies since the beginning of the democratization process in 1990. Despite a 1995 commitment by Minister of Cooperation Jacques Godfrain that France would intervene to reinstate a democratically elected government if a defense treaty had been signed with that country, France refused to intervene in Niger and ultimately decided to work with the military regime headed by Colonel Ibrahim Mainassara Baré. Not surprisingly, the democratically elected francophone neighbors of Niger were worried by French inaction. In a throwback to an earlier era of authoritarian rule and highly questionable democratic practices, Colonel Baré announced that there would be multiparty elections in 1996, presented himself as the candidate of the ruling party, and subsequently won the elections to the congratulatory toasts of local French diplomats.

The events in Niger signaled the reemergence of African militaries as critical forces to be reckoned with in francophone Africa, as well as the growing stagnation of the democratization process that had begun in 1990. When military uprisings subsequently broke out against the democratically elected government of Ange-Félix Patassé in the Central African Republic in April and May 1996, Chirac twice ordered French troops stationed in the country to intervene to maintain stability and order. These interventions ironically occurred against the backdrop of a statement by Minister of Cooperation Godfrain that French troops would only intervene in countries threatened by external aggression.

The troubling aspect of French intervention in the Central African Republic is that the Patassé regime, although democratically elected in 1993, had become increasingly authoritarian and corrupt. Critics therefore questioned the true motives behind the Chirac administration's actions. Intervention presumably was not driven by a desire to promote democracy (at least based on earlier French inaction in Niger), nor was it the result of popular appeals from the Central African Republic. Popular public opinion instead was overwhelmingly opposed to Patassé's regime, and produced a virulently anti-French backlash in the aftermath of French military intervention.

The most plausible explanation for the shift in policy is that the Chirac administration had received "panicked calls" from other francophone client states who feared that French inaction would embolden opposition movements in their countries. The emergence of overwhelming anti-French sentiment after the second intervention in May 1996 did lead Chirac to decide against military action in December 1996 when a third mutiny broke out (although a small retaliatory strike was authorized in January 1997 when mutinous troops killed two French soldiers). Chirac instead supported the diplomatic efforts of a delegation of francophone African presidents led by Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso.

The dilemmas associated with French military intervention are demonstrated by the Chirac administration's response to an expanding crisis in the Great Lakes region, particularly the emergence and spread of a guerrilla insurgency in eastern Zaire. French policymakers perceive the Great Lakes crisis in francophone-anglophone terms: the guerrilla insurgency in eastern Zaire is led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who in turn is strongly supported by and allied with the Rwandan government of Paul Kagame and the Ugandan government of Yoweri Museveni. As a result, the French consider Kabila's guerrilla movement to be under Anglo-Saxon influence, and therefore hostile to France. One can assume that for France the worst-case scenario would be Kabila's overthrow of the Mobutu regime and the installation of a new government strongly allied with Rwanda, Uganda, and the United States. Such a government could then act as a springboard for the further spread of Anglo-Saxon influence throughout Africa.

The Chirac administration's attempts at playing a more proactive role in the Great Lakes region have been restrained by a variety of factors. First, the lack of interest among the other major Western powers, especially the United States, has stymied French proposals to create a UN-sponsored, multilateral military force that would be dispatched to eastern Zaire, ostensibly to protect refugees from Burundi and Rwanda. Second, the option of unilateral French intervention is out of the question because of the publicly stated promise of the Rwandan government and Kabila's guerrilla forces to militarily engage French forces. Unlike earlier French military interventions in Rwanda, French forces would be confronted by battle-hardened troops capable of inflicting heavy casualties. Finally, even if the Chirac administration were willing to accept the public uproar that surely would accompany French

casualties in any unilateral intervention, the French military is simply incapable of independently moving and sustaining the large numbers of troops and equipment necessary for a long-term engagement in such a vast military theater. In short, French military action in the largest country of francophone Africa essentially has been vetoed by a combination of local and international forces.

In the case of Algeria, the dilemma confronting Chirac is not so much constrained policy choices as the spillover of those policies into French society. Having fought a bloody war

from 1954 to 1962 to gain independence from France, Algeria is currently locked in a brutal civil war between the military-backed regime of President Liamine Zeroual and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), a fanatical Islamist guerrilla movement. Chirac maintains the inherited policy of providing strong financial and diplomatic support to the Algerian government, which totaled \$578 million from 1992 to 1994.

The GIA has made good on a promise to target French citizens. As a result, French nationals have been killed not only in Algeria—as in the May 1996 murder of seven French monks kidnapped from a monastery outside Algiers—but in a series of terrorist bombings in Paris, including a December 1996 explosion that killed four people and wounded over ninety others on a commuter train. "We do what we say," explained a letter from the GIA demanding the termination of all French aid to

---

*Some French policymakers considered Rwanda the first in a series of regional "dominoes" that could eventually lead to Anglo-Saxon domination of portions of Central Africa.*

---

the Zeroual regime. "If you refuse us, we are prepared to fight you and destroy your country—whatever it takes."

The GIA bombings in Paris have contributed to a significant backlash in France against African immigrants, especially those from North Africa. The implications of this backlash were most vividly demonstrated in 1996 by the Chirac administration's heavy-handed removal and arrest of African immigrants who had barricaded themselves in the Saint-Bernard Church in Paris to protest changes in French immigration practices. The transmission of this television image across francophone Africa not only provoked feelings of "humiliation," "indignation," and "solidarity," but reminded francophone Africans of the significant gap between the rhetoric of *la francophonie* and the reality of French consideration of their African counterparts as second-class citizens.

## PARIS VERSUS WASHINGTON

The international debate that unfolded during the fall of 1996 over who should serve as the next UN secretary general offered some interesting insights into France's ability to lead the francophone African voting bloc in international organizations. The Chirac administration led a losing battle to reelect Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for a second term. The Clinton administration had vowed early on to use its veto rights to block Boutros-Ghali's candidacy, and did so at a November 19 meeting of the Security Council. France responded by threatening to veto any candidate from a nonfrancophone country, and strongly promoted the candidacy of Amara Essy, Ivory Coast's foreign minister. In the end, Kofi Annan, a native English speaker from Ghana who was perceived among French policymakers as the "American candidate," was chosen by the Security Council on December 13, 1996. The most plausible explanation as to why the Chirac administration ultimately backed away from its earlier commitment was the loss of support among francophone African countries (which inevitably rallied around Annan's candidacy). When confronted with the possibility that an extended stalemate between the United States and France might lead to the selection of a non-African secretary general, the francophone African leaders placed their common heritage as Africans before their more select common attachment to *la francophonie*.

The conflict over the selection of the secretary general is indicative of a rising war of words between

the United States State Department and the French Ministry of Cooperation over francophone Africa that peaked just before the United States presidential elections of November 1996. A turning point occurred when Minister of Cooperation Godfrain chided Secretary of State Warren Christopher for his decision to make his first (and last) official visit to Africa approximately four years after assuming office and literally weeks before the presidential elections—obviously for political gain. Christopher responded to the perceived diplomatic slight by demanding an official apology. When none was forthcoming, he publicly criticized French policy: "All nations must cooperate, not compete, if we are going to make a positive difference in Africa's future," explained Christopher. "The time has passed when Africa could be carved into spheres of influence, or when outside powers could view whole groups of states as their private domain." Not to be outdone, Godfrain responded in kind: "If I were a political or electoral counselor to President Bill Clinton, I would advise him to worry more about helping African development after the elections."

An important dimension of the rising war of words is the parallel development of local United States–French competition for the favor of emerging elites throughout francophone Africa. Local United States diplomats are more vocal than their French counterparts concerning the democratization process in francophone Africa. This outspokenness, however, is not due to a greater United States commitment to democratization. Indeed, there is abundant evidence of the contradictions between Washington's pro-democracy rhetoric and its foreign policy actions throughout Africa both during and after the cold war.

The logic of diplomatic competition at the local level is seemingly based on a perception of the democratization process as a zero-sum game (that is, one person's gain is another's loss). From the perspective of local United States ambassadors, promoting multiparty democracy is a low-cost strategy with potentially high returns—namely, the replacement of pro-French elites with new protagonists potentially more sensitive to United States interests. From the perspective of local French ambassadors, the reverse holds true, which explains why French policymakers tend to emerge as protectors of the status quo. In the case of Benin, for example, Nicephore Soglo's victory in the 1991 presidential elections led to the formation of a regime more interested in promoting closer United States ties. It is precisely for this reason, argue crit-



ics of French policies, that local French diplomats provided significant support to Soglo's predecessor, Mathieu Kerekou, who emerged victorious in the 1996 presidential elections and subsequently installed a regime that represented a return to the status quo.

France's efforts to strengthen and expand its influence beyond la francophonie were nicely captured by the 1996 Franco-African summit held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The summit was attended by a record 45 countries, including 26 heads of state. Although little of substance actually emerged from the discussions, conference organizers took pride in the fact that the meeting functioned as a surrogate Organization of African Unity (OAU). Attendees represented all the colonial heritages of the African continent, signaling a broadening of the Franco-African summit beyond its original francophone organizers whose first official meeting was held in 1973 in Paris. The Chirac administration was especially pleased with the first-time attendance of Nigeria, which was represented by General Sani Abacha. The only significant point of dissension occurred when Chirac sought to allay the fears of his franc zone counterparts by proclaiming that France would never again devalue the CFA franc—even though the further implementation of the Maastricht treaty calls for the creation of a common European currency. The response of the assembled franc zone leaders was both guarded and lighthearted, with Pascal Lissouba of the Congo taking the lead in demanding that Chirac place this promise "in writing"—a clear reference to earlier promises obviously not kept when France devalued the CFA franc in 1994.

The broadening scope of the Franco-African summit is part of the Chirac administration's aggressive "triple strategy" of enhancing links with the three major anglophone powers of Africa: Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya. In each case, French foreign policy is primarily driven by the pursuit of economic interests (that is, trade and investment). French policymakers also downplay the importance of human rights issues, as demonstrated by France's close relationship with the extremely authoritarian Kenyan regime of President Daniel arap Moi. It is precisely because of its neomercantilist conception

of bilateral relations within the anglophone world that France has finally established close ties with the authoritarian military government of Nigeria, a development that only became possible after the death in December 1993 of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the former president of Ivory Coast, who viewed Nigeria as a regional threat. In this regard, France opposes international efforts to impose economic sanctions against Kenya and Nigeria.

### HOW "SPECIAL" A RELATIONSHIP?

Some observers take the extremely pessimistic view that francophone Africa is on the verge of "Somalization"—state disintegration and a descent into chaos. France in this scenario is not willing to remain involved, and therefore is preparing to abandon its former clients to disintegrate on their own. Others err in the opposite direction by offering the image of a highly engaged French policymaking establishment that is committed to aiding francophone Africa in the pursuit of the triple goals of promoting la francophonie, economic development, and democratization. France in this scenario becomes the savior of francophone Africa, a modern-day example of enlightened policies that harkens back to colonial rationales for the imposition of direct colonial rule.

The reality of the evolution of French foreign policy from the cold war to the increasingly turbulent era of the 1990s requires a more nuanced understanding somewhere between these two extremes. French policymakers are committed to maintaining some type of special relationship with their francophone African counterparts. The word "special," however, means something completely different in the evolving context of the 1990s than it did in the 1970s or the 1950s. Most important, regardless of what special ties French policymakers ideally would like to pursue, French freedom of action is increasingly constrained by a variety of factors and developments: France's responsibilities and interests outside Africa; the evolving structure of the international system; declining military capabilities during a period of growing domestic constraints; and, most important, the emergence of new elites in francophone Africa less willing to accept the same types of ties enjoyed and permitted by their predecessors. ■

"Museveni has been critical in extricating Uganda from the economic and political quagmire in which the country had become stuck by the mid-1980s. . . . However, these changes belie the underlying instability, inherent tensions, and manifest autocracy of the system."

## Uganda's "Benevolent" Dictatorship

J. OLOKA-ONYANGO

Few contemporary political and socioeconomic transitions on the African continent have been as dramatic or contradictory as Uganda's. Just over a decade ago, the National Resistance Movement-Army (NRM-A) became the second guerrilla organization to assume power in independent Africa (the first happened in Chad). After being sworn in as president of Uganda in January 1986, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni proclaimed the era he was ushering in was more than the usual "changing of the guard" to which the people of Uganda had become accustomed. It was, he declared, nothing short of "Fundamental Change!"

Many who heard Museveni hoped his words were true, having experienced a series of violent political shifts since independence from Britain in October 1962. Against the backdrop of vicious military dictatorships such as that led by the cantankerous Field Marshal Idi Amin throughout the 1970s, civilian autocracy under Apollo Milton Obote in the early to mid-1980s, and a period of anarchy instituted by the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) immediately preceding the NRM-A takeover, Ugandans had grown weary of conflict and incessant, extraconstitutional changes in government.

### FROM BREADBASKET TO BASKET CASE

The turmoil in Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s yielded human rights violations on a scale nearly unmatched in postcolonial Africa; moreover, civil war and social strife left orphans and widows in their wake, and economic dislocation removed essentials like sugar, soap, and wheat flour from the

market stalls. Uganda became an economic basket case. Smuggling and *magendo* (black marketeering) replaced normal trade, and inflation soared into the triple digits. Given the people's experience of marauding government armies that were more likely to loot, rape, and intimidate the local populace than to engage "the enemy," reports of Museveni's disciplined guerrilla band heightened hopes that the change he promised would indeed be genuine and fundamental.

The NRM-A was created following elections in December 1980 that were widely believed to have been rigged by Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC). Museveni decided to take the fight against the electoral fraud to the bush, where he crafted the guiding philosophy of the NRM-A into a 10-point program that emphasized participatory democracy, the elimination of sectarianism, and respect for human rights. Beginning with only a handful of supporters, the insurgency grew until it came to occupy the Luwero Triangle, a wide swath of territory in the central region of Buganda. A combination of internal wrangling and battle fatigue eventually led the UNLA to turn against Obote in a military coup, paving the way for NRM-A victory in the war in 1986 and Museveni's accession to power.

Today Museveni's slogan has become "No Change!" a campaign chant employed by the NRM to great effect in the May 1996 presidential elections. The elections marked the coming of age for the NRM and the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), the renamed military wing of the NRM. "No Change!" was used as a battle cry for the continued endorsement of the NRM regime, which, according to Museveni, had achieved its goal of fundamental change by introducing a lasting sense of peace and security. In the event that some might have forgotten this, the NRM used the image of skulls from the Luwero Triangle and the sound of gunshots in its

---

J. OLOKA-ONYANGO teaches at Makerere University in Uganda and was recently a visiting professor at Harvard Law School. His latest book is *The Dynamics of Constitutional Politics in Uganda* (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 1997).

electoral campaign advertising. The message was simple: a vote against Museveni was a vote for a reversion to the chaos of the past.

## NO PARTY, NO CHANGE

The 1996 elections were significant for a variety of other reasons. Not only were they Uganda's first direct presidential elections, they were also a test of the various experiments in governance that had been introduced by the NRM since 1986. Among the most significant of these experiments is the "no-party" or movement system of government. Against the return of multiparty political systems that has swept the continent since the late 1980s, the NRM has held out the alternative of a no-party system. Arguing that political parties are divisive, sectarian, and unsuited for "preindustrial" societies such as Uganda, the NRM has prevented opposition political parties from effectively operating or challenging the hegemony of the movement system.

This view of politics was endorsed in the 1995 constitution. While the new constitution has several progressive provisions, such as those mandating affirmative action for women, its basic intent is to place political parties in suspended animation. Parties are permitted only to issue statements to the press. Organizing party congresses, holding public rallies, and openly campaigning on a party ticket are outlawed. Under the no-party system, competition for electoral office is on the basis of "individual merit" absent the stated affiliation of any particular political organization. In other words, everyone "belongs" to the movement, which is touted as a multi-ideological, noncompetitive, and all-embracing political system of governance.

The kernel of the movement system is the Resistance Councils and Committees (RCS). These nine-person assemblies of directly elected individuals (with reserved places for women and young people) are charged with the overall administration of their local areas, the settlement of petty disputes, and the creation of municipal regulations. RCS commence at the village level and extend to the parish, the county, and eventually the district. Political and administrative power, which had been highly centralized, was dispensed to more local levels of organization.

RCS (since renamed Local Councils) can be regarded as a reaction to Uganda's colonial history and experience. At the local level of governance in the colonial system, the most powerful instrument of tyranny was the chief, who was head policeman, prosecutor, judge, prison warden, and executioner. The chief was omnipotent and omniscient, coerc-

ing cash crop production here, stifling anticolonial dissent there. Despite independence and the subsequent removal of centralized colonial autocracy, the institution of chieftaincy remained intact and performed the same coercive functions it always had. RCS destroyed the hegemony and autocracy of the local chief in postcolonial Uganda.

However populist—and popular—the RCS may appear to be, they suffer from several limitations. Only village-level elections are universal: the larger the scale, the more restricted the suffrage. At the highest level elections are by an electoral college that is largely unrepresentative and wholly unaccountable. Furthermore, RCS are able to influence only local politics and developments; issues relating to the economy and social services are decided at the national level by a parliament dominated by NRM stalwarts.

The real character of the RCS as a grassroots mechanism for the consolidation of movement rule emerged in the 1996 elections, dispelling any notion that they were truly participatory or that they could be genuinely nonpartisan. Despite the fact that the elections were held on the basis of individual merit, the state's power and resources were manifest in aiding some candidates and in intimidating others, especially those with known multiparty sympathies.

In the 1996 election Museveni was opposed by Paulo Ssemwogerere, leader of the Democratic Party (DP) and a former NRM minister who quit government to represent a coalition of political groups seeking to restore pluralist politics. But given Ssemwogerere's endorsement by the UPC, the NRM recast the election as a fight between Museveni and Obote, even though Obote had been in exile in Zambia since his overthrow in 1985. The opposition coalition tried hard to dispel the Obote bogeyman, but to no avail. The situation was made worse by the NRM's blatant intimidation of Ssemwogerere and his supporters. Furthermore, the NRM harassed opposition political actors into breaking ranks and joining the NRM. During the election, such chicanery was combined with the heavy deployment of state resources and institutions in favor of incumbent Museveni. It was not surprising that he secured 75 percent of the vote, a victory lauded by observers as a "free and fair" exercise of the will of the Ugandan people—an assessment that brushed aside the many limitations of the preelection context and the process itself.

Museveni's shift from "Fundamental Change!" to the "No Change!" slogan is significant for several



other reasons. In 1986, one could discern hints of a Marxist or Maoist tendency in the NRM's political and economic programs. From the ubiquitous AK-47 to the visions of state-owned public enterprise, the rhetoric of the movement's "commissars," and the RC concept itself, the NRM projected itself as a group that was sympathetic to socialist principles. Indeed, long stints in socialist Tanzania and Mozambique by the NRM leadership and an initial rejection of World Bank and IMF prescriptions for economic recovery led many to believe the NRM would pursue socialist, or at least mixed-economy, policies.

But the rhetorical commitment to some form of social consciousness disappeared. Museveni quickly became a "market-reform(ed) Marxist" as he vigorously adopted the free market gospel of modernization and today is one of its most ardent and articulate proponents. Among Africa's current crop of leaders, his views on economic reform are regarded as providing the necessary panacea to the problem of economic stagnation on the continent. In the process Museveni has become the "blue-eyed boy" of Western financiers and leaders. This commitment to free market policies has meant that Western donors are more hesitant to push democratic reform in Uganda than they have been in other African countries such as neighboring Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia. Although they recognize the inherently monopolizing and undemocratic thrust that underpins the movement system, they are happy with the present stability for the free exercise of market forces. In short, they do not want to rock the boat. According to this form of reasoning, Museveni's "benevolent" dictatorship is far better than a multipartist who cannot guarantee order and stability.

## THE PRICE OF REFORM

Under Museveni's guidance and the prodding of a World Bank and IMF structural adjustment program (SAP), far-reaching changes have been under way in the Ugandan economy. Currency reform stabilized the Ugandan shilling, the government has privatized state-owned enterprises, and incentives for foreign investment have been placed in a new code designed to keep foreign capital coming. If the numbers are to be believed, the effect of these policies has been dramatic. Uganda has registered between 6 and 10 percent annual economic growth over the past five years.

A recent rise in world market prices for some of Uganda's traditional export crops, like cotton and coffee, and the liberalization of export and crop-

marketing systems, have led to increased benefits for at least some members of Uganda's large class of rural farmers. At the same time, the traditional reliance on the vagaries of just a handful of cash crops has been ameliorated by a program of diversification to so-called nontraditional crops like sesame seeds, roses and other decorative flowers, and vanilla. But the real benefits of this "boom" are much less obvious. Despite touting Uganda as an economic miracle and likening it to the "tigers" of East Asia, even the World Bank has admitted that real poverty has increased under the SAP. Privatization has led to retrenchments and layoffs, and discriminatory investment policies have marginalized indigenous business and production. Furthermore, in the quest to encourage foreign business and enterprise, the state has turned a blind eye to the conditions of labor, wherein wages are suppressed to below subsistence level and trade union activity strenuously prohibited.

The SAP has also affected access to social services such as health care through the introduction of user fees at government-owned institutions, policies that have placed the cost of basic medicine beyond the reach of the rural poor. The push to the market has led to a major food export drive. Because Uganda is considered a veritable breadbasket, there is no coherent food security policy. The net result is that the promotion of food crops for the export market has led to domestic shortages, and in some instances (compounded by drought) even to famine. Long able to feed its neighbors, Uganda is in serious danger of being unable to feed itself.

Uganda's heavy reliance on donor assistance has led to the exponential growth of its external debt over the past decade. And while international financial institutions have recently discussed the issue of debt forgiveness for countries such as Uganda that have pursued adjustment programs with zeal, the exact form such forgiveness will assume is clouded in mystery.

Even if Uganda's \$4 billion debt is forgiven, heightened reliance on foreign sources of funding for basic support and the emphasis on export-led production will have a questionable impact on future economic sustainability. A major scourge of the economic reform process remains corruption. The situation has assumed such debilitating dimensions that Uganda was ranked seventh in the annual survey of global corruption compiled by Transparency International, narrowly edged out by countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

Despite a belief that Museveni himself is largely free of blemish, members of the cabinet and Museveni's family have been implicated in dubious deals and questionable associations. A principal target of such machinations has been the privatization exercise, which has seen well-placed politicians and close Museveni associates figure prominently in the successful bidding for the property.

## THE WAGES OF WAR

Despite the NRM's claim that it has restored peace and security, Uganda is still riven by conflicts. An insurgency that festered in northern Uganda in late 1987 continues to evade peaceful resolution 10 years later. Commencing as a rearguard action by the retreating soldiers of the UNLA military regime, the conflict has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, internal displacement, and serious violations of human rights by both sides. The northern conflict has also seen its share of drama. This includes the Holy Spirit Movement, whose followers, led by fundamentalist Christian "priestess" Alice Lakwena, go into battle armed only with a dousing of peanut oil to protect them from UPDF bullets. The equally spiritual but extremely malevolent Joseph Kony has instituted a reign of terror in the area. Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has engaged in the abduction, rape, and mutilation of schoolchildren. For its part, the UPDF has retaliated by herding civilians into so-called protected villages, where physical safety, basic health facilities, and adequate hygiene are seriously lacking. Moreover, as the war has dragged on, the discipline of the UPDF has been sorely tested, and it has increasingly engaged in atrocities and human rights violations of the kind previously associated with its predecessors.

The escalation in the northern conflict is partly due to the dynamics of regional geopolitics. Museveni has long been a supporter of his old college friend John Garang, whose Sudan People's Liberation Army is fighting an interminable civil war against the fundamentalist government of Sudan. Realizing that it could get back at Uganda by exploiting the northern insurgency, the Khartoum government began to arm and supply the LRA and a motley collection of other rebel groups in the area, such as the West Nile Bank Liberation Front and the Uganda Rescue Front. A war that seemed to be petering out as the combatants grew weary suddenly returned in a fury in early 1994. The ragtag

LRA acquired a sophisticated arsenal of weapons, including land mines, that enabled it to wreak more havoc on the civilian populace and to outmaneuver the UPDF. The northern situation is compounded by the government's refusal to sue for peace and its insistence on a military resolution to the conflict. Since his election last May, Museveni has intermittently set up camp in the north, vowing to end the insurgency himself. All the deadlines he has given for the war's termination embarrassingly pass by, with no end in sight.

The NRM government has been plagued by less prominent but equally destabilizing insurgencies. Some have sprouted in the NRM's former guerrilla base in the central region, others in the west, espousing a wide range of grievances against the incumbent regime. The single exception is the uprising in the northeast, which appears to have been successfully quelled. The latest insurgency in

western Uganda is believed to be the work of the Zairian government, which is seeking revenge for Museveni's alleged assistance to Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire (ADFL) in eastern Zaire.

---

*Some observers hypothesize that the Zairian struggle is the latest chapter in the Museveni-inspired quest for a greater Tutsi "empire."*

---

## TURNABOUT AND (UN)FAIR PLAY

The NRM's changes in rhetoric are mirrored in its attitude toward the issue of traditional monarchies and ethnically based political interests. The kingdoms of the Great Lakes region date back several centuries. Under colonialism, Buganda in particular played a largely collaborative role in support of British rule. That privileged position eventually crystallized in a special federal status for Buganda under the independence settlement in 1962. After independence, conflict between Buganda and the republicans came to a head. In 1966, Prime Minister Obote abolished all the kingdoms, exiling the Buganda monarch, Kabaka Frederick ("King Freddy") Mutesa, and inflicting a permanent wound on the pride of the Baganda people. The desecration of the kingdom was never forgiven.

Although Museveni's bush war was fought in Buganda and with the active support of monarchical elements, once it came to power the NRM denied that it had any intention of restoring the old kingdoms. "We did not fight to bring back the monarchies," declared Museveni. However, in a surprising about-face, Museveni allowed Prince Ronald Mutebi to be crowned as the new kabaka in 1993, effectively restoring the Buganda kingdom—albeit as a cultural,

rather than a political, entity. Coming on the eve of the election for the constituent assembly, which was to discuss the status of the political system that Uganda was to adopt (including the issue of monarchies), the NRM's reversal was suspect. In the fight for the assembly, the NRM needed all the allies it could secure against the multiparty supporters. The quid pro quo with Buganda was the delivery of the kingdom in exchange for its support of the movement. With the critical aid of Buganda—the country's largest and most populous region—the supporters of the movement subsequently won the election and secured the no-party system as part of the constitutional arrangement. But the NRM relationship with Buganda is uneasy; dissatisfaction remains over the failure to secure the political privileges and autonomy that were originally promised as part of the constituent assembly trade-off.

The convoluted situation in Uganda must also be viewed in terms of the tumultuous regional context. Turmoil and conflict of varying levels of intensity plague Sudan, Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, and Kenya. Museveni is widely believed to have a hand in each of the conflicts in these countries. The president's own position on regional politics does nothing to diminish this suspicion. A longtime fan of larger markets and a critic of the "foolish arbitrariness" of colonial boundaries, Museveni often proudly recalls the days of the great precolonial interlucustrine kingdoms, which covered a vast stretch of territory ranging from northern Tanzania to central Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and parts of Zaire.

Some observers hypothesize that the Zairian struggle is the latest chapter in the Museveni-inspired quest for a greater Tutsi "empire." Indeed, the French government has consistently accused Uganda of fomenting rebellion in the region. This charge was first made in 1990 after the formation of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), an offshoot of the National Resistance Army that has taken control of Rwanda. More recent allegations about Uganda's involvement with Kabila's ADFL in Zaire seemingly confirm the dominant view of Uganda's machinations in the region. There is, of course, a francophone/anglophone tension that

undergirds many of the conflicts, and Museveni appears to enjoy the tacit approval of Britain and the United States in the spread of "Anglo" hegemony in the region. Indeed, reports of arms flows to and through Uganda (especially from the United States) lend further credence to this contention. Whether or not the allegations are true, they have a profound effect on internal Ugandan politics, enabling military insurgents to find willing supporters for their campaigns against the Museveni regime. This keeps the NRM preoccupied with military issues and diverted from urgent social and economic concerns.

## BEYOND MUSEVENI

Museveni's larger-than-life persona is Uganda's boon and its bane. Museveni has been critical in extricating Uganda from the economic and political quagmire in which the country had become stuck by the mid-1980s. Even the most ardent opponents of Yoweri Museveni and the movement system of government cannot deny the significant changes that have been introduced in Uganda over the last decade of his stewardship. However, these changes belie the underlying instability, the inherent tensions, and the manifest autocracy of the system. The movement system has failed to institutionalize mechanisms of governance distinct from the personality of Museveni. As a result, major doubts about sustainability remain.

Uganda today recalls the images of the early days of African independence, when the "founding fathers," such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Jomo Kenyatta, enjoyed a legitimacy derived from their participation in the struggle for liberation from colonial hegemony. But these same leaders were unable to envision a system independent of their own participation in and domination over it. Thus came the subsequent disintegration into single-party regimes and life presidencies. The success of the Ugandan experiment will be sealed only if it can extricate itself from reliance on a single individual and escape the travails of all systems that have disintegrated into single-person hegemony. To achieve enduring change, Uganda must reignite the spirit of "Fundamental Change!" ■



Tanzania is beset by economic hardship and the travails of fledgling democracy. Yet, its "tattered legacy of peaceful political change and national cultural integration, coupled with a 'new broom' leadership and a slight upturn in economic activity, may allow the government to overcome the present discontents."

## Tanzania: From Disillusionment to Guarded Optimism

HARVEY GLICKMAN

Seeking self-reliance yet continuously aid-dependent, leftist yet occasionally a darling of the West, and advertising a more humane democracy yet constructing a quasi-Leninist party state, Tanzania's hold on the world's imagination after independence in 1961 was essentially sentimental: a third way between capitalism and communism, between West and East. Although never achieved, Tanzania's goal of "self-reliance" appealed to elements across the global political spectrum. Yet this international image is contradicted by Tanzania's actual political and economic performance. The policies of one-party democracy, African socialism, and nonalignment in foreign policy, all staples of the 1960s and 1970s, must be judged failures. Today, Tanzania's leadership faces the daunting tasks of disposing of the remains of a failed socialist system and struggling to repair a damaged political system.

Tanzania's profile, in the life and career of President Julius Nyerere, was poor, earnest, caring, and honest—at least until 1985, when Nyerere formally stepped aside in a peaceful constitutional transition. Tanzania's government was stable while other African governments succumbed to coups and civil wars. The country conducted consecutive national elections at regular five-year intervals. Other one-party states ignored mass participation; Nyerere's Tanzania devised a system of constituency primaries under the party umbrella, controlled at the center, but offering a voice for localism. Other African gov-

ernments extolled the virtues of pan-Africanism; Nyerere engineered the union of his own country and an offshore neighbor. Other African governments denounced white racist governments on the continent; Tanzania took action, cutting off relations with Britain over the issue of African rule in Rhodesia in 1965, and offering shelter to the liberation parties and guerrilla forces of southern Africa.

While most African governments rejected the secession of Biafra from Nigeria in 1967, Tanzania recognized Biafra's short-lived government on moral grounds, arguing it was an act of self-defense against ethnic pogroms. While other African countries merely denounced Idi Amin in Uganda in the 1970s, Tanzania's army defeated him in battle in 1979 and drove him from the country. But even Nyerere's international reputation, oratorical skill, and laudable goals proved insufficient for a socialist political economy, enormously and increasingly dependent on the largesse of foreign donors. By the end of Nyerere's presidency in 1985, when he was succeeded by Ali Hassan Mwinyi, the country had fallen into a steep economic decline.

Until the 1990s, Tanzania had escaped significant ethnic, racial, regional, and religious conflict. In October 1995, however, the country's first competitive elections for president and parliament raised doubts about the commitment of the triumphant (formerly monopoly) party to pluralist democracy. The fallout from the election caused serious concern about the fate of 30 years of striving toward national political integration, progress made despite 120 tribal groupings, a vast territory, and poor communications.

Secessionist sentiment is now strong in Zanzibar, an archipelago united in 1964 with mainland Tan-

---

HARVEY GLICKMAN is a professor of political science and director of African studies at Haverford College. His most recent book is *Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in Africa* (Atlanta, Ga.: African Studies Association Press, 1995). The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Raymond Hopkins, Richard Mshomba, Elaine Mshomba, and Victor Kimesera.

ganyika, but which maintains a separate government and assembly, as well as significant representation in those organs of the Union. Zanzibar is also now home to the strongest regional opposition to the erstwhile ruling party. These policy differences translate into religious conflict between Muslims and Christians on mainland Tanzania, and political antagonism between indigenous Africans and residents of Zanzibar of Arab descent.

A strong asset is the country's new leader, Benjamin Mkapa, who started his presidential term in November 1995 by making public his family's financial assets (two houses, a farm, and four cars). His appointed prime minister is Frederick Sumaye, a former agriculture minister who, like Mkapa, maintains a modest lifestyle. Mkapa's cabinet is distinguished by youth, competence, and the absence of old faces. All but two of the mainland regions are represented, and it has more Muslims than at any time before.

The quality of Tanzania's future will greatly depend on the management of five issues: dealing with refugees from Burundi and Rwanda, making progress in economic reform, battling a culture of corruption, expanding multiparty politics to more meaningful democratic government, and overcoming the threat of communal conflict.

## REFUGEE TURNABOUT

The Nansen Medal of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was awarded to President Nyerere in 1983 for his efforts to resettle and absorb refugees and exiles in his country. His personal efforts continue as a mediator in Burundi; Tanzania also played an important role in the 1993 Arusha agreement (an effort to reconcile the hostile parties in Rwanda) and the establishment in 1995 of a UN war crimes tribunal in Arusha. Tanzania's charity to refugees and exiles since its independence extended to land for farming, resettlement, and programs of voluntary repatriation. This considerably reduced the potential for tensions inside the country, at least until the last three years.

After Zaire, Tanzania hosts the second-largest number of refugees in Africa. More than 700,000—including a half million from Rwanda and about 200,000 from Burundi—are in camps in the northern and western parts of the country. Burundians now comprise two generations of refugees. Thousands of Burundians crossed into Tanzania in 1963, fleeing the violence accompanying Burundi's first coup. These earliest refugees were resettled and some achieved citizenship. In 1980 tens of thou-

sands of Rwandan refugees were offered citizenship. A second wave of refugees from Rwanda entered in 1983, after expulsion from Uganda. Just under 100,000 Burundians have fled the latest surge of violence since 1993.

Since 1994, however, Tanzania's generosity has been sorely stretched by the refugee flood from Rwanda and Burundi: 200,000 arrived in one day in April 1994. During most of 1995 Tanzania closed its border with Burundi. This drew sharp criticism from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in part because of Tanzania's previous generous treatment of refugees and mediation of disputes that cause refugee flows.

Tanzania's shift results from two causes. First, Rwandan Hutu militia leaders were organizing in the refugee camps. Security for locals, refugees, and relief workers became difficult to ensure. Second, after Rwandan Hutu from Burundi and Burundi Hutu arrived in waves in early 1995, Burundi Tutsi soldiers followed in hot pursuit. In

October 1995, the Tanzanian government expelled the Burundi ambassador, apparently after protests over incursions by Burundian soldiers in Tanzania brought no satisfaction. In addition to closing the border, Tanzania began expelling groups of refugees who had fled both Rwanda and Burundi. Tensions mounted among relief workers, some of whom were accused of helping refugees into Tanzania despite the

border closing, and between Tanzanian troops and refugees, both new and older arrivals. The potential for unrest and violence was heightened by refugees crossing Lake Tanganyika from Zaire, fleeing the Zairian rebellion. With the Tanzanian army on the borders, northern Burundi has become a corridor for arms traffic into Zaire and Burundi. In December 1995, newly elected President Mkapa declared that "Tanzania will not allow refugees to stay indefinitely," a policy reluctantly implemented 14 months later.

## THE DECLINE OF "AFRICAN SOCIALISM"

Tanzania ranked 172d out of 174 countries in the World Bank's 1995 world income tables; 42 percent of its population in 1996 lived in "relative poverty"; its per capita income hovers around \$100 a year, and half the government's budget depends on foreign aid. Its international debt burden—over 200 percent of GDP in 1996—is legendary.

Tanzania's economy was controlled by its ruling party—the Tanganyika African National Union

---

*Tanzania  
remains  
fragile, but  
it is not  
crumbling.*

---

(TANU), later renamed the Chama Cha Mapinduzi, "the Party of the Revolution" (CCM)—and dominated by the ideology of Julius Nyerere for more than 30 years. Despite personal modesty and a public persona captured by his title of *mwali*mu (teacher), Nyerere's plans for Tanzania were grandiose. Central planning, nationalized enterprises, and government corporations dominated the economy. Peasant farming was collectivized between 1973 and 1976, accompanied by rioting and violence against government agents. Although there was some import-substitution industrialization, the economy essentially sacrificed growth for equity. Social needs, such as health and education, were to come first. Somehow, self-sufficiency in food was also supposed to substitute for export-led growth. Revenue depended on high taxes on export crops, such as coffee, tea, cotton, and cashews, and was subsidized by foreign grants and loans.

For a poor country, structurally reliant on earnings from foreign trade, this proved disastrous. Collectivization produced agricultural decline, peasant disaffection, and withdrawal into household self-sufficiency. Budget deficits grew. Tanzania could not withstand the end of the coffee boom of the 1970s and the oil price shocks, particularly in 1979. Inflation soared. The economic infrastructure, especially roads, electricity supply, and communications, decayed. Policy bias against farmers, an overvalued currency that cheapened imports, and a bloated and politicized bureaucracy made gaining the ability to grant licenses, tariff protections, and franchises the chief goal of the ambitious and powerful. A political class acquired a vested interest in controls, which strangled enterprise. From 1980 to 1985, per capita income fell by 12 percent.

Between 1981 and 1985, the last years of his presidency, Nyerere reluctantly engaged in negotiations with international financial institutions as part of an attempt to reverse the decline, devising reforms that augured the end of the Tanzanian socialist system. Structural adjustment programs, which called for reducing controls on marketing and currency exchange rates as well as cutting overall public expenditure, produced a recession and considerable human hardship. Nyerere's successor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, and a group of younger technocrats agreed to further measures. The Economic Recovery Program of 1986—which continued into 1992 with IMF support as the Economic and Social Action Program—made slow progress, particularly in freeing foreign exchange, reducing tariffs, and dismantling crop-marketing monopolies. Never-

theless, these efforts succeeded in slightly reviving economic growth, especially in the vital area of agriculture. Yet although traders, small manufacturers, and export farmers have gained, social services have declined, public sector salaries have dropped, and the incentive for efficiency remains low.

Dependence on foreign assistance continues. In 1996 about \$1 billion annually was still considered necessary to continue reforms. (In Sweden an exasperated editor wrote in a normally supportive journal, "Scandinavia's adopted country goes backwards.") The slow pace of economic reform, and complaints about corruption, led the IMF to delay granting credits from 1992 until 1996. Balance of payments problems have not been fully conquered. Yet in the last 18 months the IMF and the World Bank have grown more positive, in part because of a rise in the rate of growth in gross domestic product. Tanzania is now on a list of up to a dozen countries slated for priority treatment in financial assistance from these institutions.

The economy's decline in the 1980s and the misuse of public office permitted corruption to expand and seep downward from the higher ranks. Since economic reform benefits those who have entrepreneurial skills and some private capital, the small Asian merchant community has been the target of bribery charges, which increases communal tensions, especially in coastal towns.

The difficulty in uprooting corruption is tied to the slow pace of dismantling government controls and to the sluggishness in improving the standard of living of ordinary people. They miss social services and education assistance, but they have not yet seen much rise in incomes. On the plus side, cabinet resignations over corruption charges have begun to establish stronger political accountability. On the minus side, since the tiny Asian (and in Zanzibar, Arab) communities are strongly represented in trade and finance, and seem to live better than the vast majority of ordinary Africans, communal relations are also strained.

## THE ETHNIC DIMENSION

Civic liberty, economic liberalization, and the opening of the political system to multiparty competition have begun to expose Tanzania to the ethnic and communal conflict that bedevils other states in Africa. So far, "tribal" conflict has been muted and open differences have been confined to the Zanzibar issue. Opposition sentiment in Zanzibar predates competitive politics, fed by economic decline on the islands, especially the clove trade on



Pemba Island. In 1988, rivalry between Zanzibar President Aboud Jumbe and his chief minister, Seif Shariff Hamad, led to the latter's dismissal from the CCM, suspicion that a coup was being plotted, riots, and the dispatch of troops from the mainland to restore order. It hardly helped matters that the Zanzibar government secretly joined the Organization of Islamic Conference, only to withdraw a few months later under heavy criticism.

Conflicts in Zanzibar led to secessionist sentiments expressed more openly as opposition parties became increasingly active. By 1993, antimainland sentiment had ensnared militant Islamism; anti-Muslim looting was kindled by a self-styled Christian fundamentalist clergyman-cum-politician in Dar es Salaam. It was clear that opposition to CCM rule in the Union would find widespread support in Zanzibar as multiparty politics heated up. In retaliation, the Union's National Assembly approved a motion urging a separate mainland government and legislature by constitutional amendment.

The last national election under the single-party system was in 1990. Mwinyi, chosen by the CCM as Nyerere's successor in 1985, won reelection with 95.5 percent of the vote. The reelected president was a Muslim from Zanzibar and his selection by the CCM reflected the institution of alternating mainland and Zanzibar presidents. Mwinyi, a "trimmer" in politics, found himself caught in two complementary dilemmas: between the inherited problems of the Nyerere years, including increasing corruption, and the need for economic renewal; and between international pressure for multiparty elections and the rejectionist socialism of the CCM old guard. He waffled in dealing with economic reform, although he replaced a number of CCM hard-liners with moderates. The antiprofitteering aspects of the CCM leadership code were quietly shelved in 1992.

## THE TRANSITION TO MULTIPARTY POLITICS

Following the trend toward more open politics that was sweeping Africa, Mwinyi appointed a commission in February 1991 to examine the feasibility of multiparty politics. The commission sent representatives abroad and consulted public opinion through party auspices. Although the commission reported opposition to the change, it concluded by recommending the adoption of a multiparty system. International donor insistence is universally suspected. It was clear that the 1995 presidential and parliamentary elections would be competitive, although the CCM would exercise the power of incumbency.

The official election campaign was marked by chaos and confusion, and as it progressed it exposed rents in the seams of the Union, first during the separate and initial stage of elections for Zanzibar on the islands, and then at the end of the process in the Union elections in Dar es Salaam. A series of overlapping divisions emerged in the voting: between Pemba and Unguja (the larger island) in Zanzibar; between Zanzibari Africans (Shirazis) and Zanzibar Arabs; between Zanzibar and the mainland over the issue of union; between Muslims and Christians; between Africans and Asians; and less blatantly, between African ethnic groups on the mainland.

Zanzibar's separate election process began with complaints from the Civic United Front (CUF), the major opposition to the CCM in the races for president and parliament of Zanzibar, that it was being intimidated by the CCM. The CUF favors economic liberalism and more trade with the Arabian Gulf states, a stance distorted by the CCM in campaign rhetoric into a plot to restore Arab control over the islands. Despite the compact size of Zanzibar (a population of 700,000), much advance preparation, and observation teams coordinated by the UN, the October polling process and results reeked of intimidation and rigging. In two constituencies, for example, the votes counted outnumbered registrants.

Nevertheless, on October 25, the CUF claimed victory. Even the CCM informally rejected the election, saying that it should be re-run, supposedly after the party realized it had lost. The final results were held up for another day before the election commission announced that the CCM candidate for president, Salmin Amour, had won by 1,565 votes over Seif Shariff Hamad. The CCM also took 26 of 50 seats in the legislature, with the CUF sweeping all of Pemba, where there are a large number of people of Arab descent.

The CUF threatened to boycott the Zanzibar parliament and, with other mainland opposition parties, the Union elections as well, charging fraud in the counting and reporting. (As late as March 1997, CUF members had refused to attend the Zanzibar House of Representatives.) The 17 donor country representatives noted "discrepancies" in the voting figures.

The Union elections went forward on October 29. They were marred by disorganized administration in Dar es Salaam, where the election was canceled and re-run on November 19. Critics claimed that the CCM promoted disorder in areas of opposition strength, which happened to be Dar es Salaam, and Zanzibar, where antimainland sentiment was

manifest. In the end, the opposition candidates for president boycotted the Dar es Salaam re-run, a low-cost tactic since the provincial results were already in. But parliamentary candidates, with much at stake, took part in the new polls.

Four candidates ran for president. The three opposition party candidates drew 38 percent of the vote, respectable in the light of all the CCM advantages, which included a national organization and virtual monopoly of the radio. The CCM's candidate, Benjamin Mkapa, took 62 percent of the vote, a total which on closer inspection amounts to less than one in three of all people eligible to register and vote.

Mkapa's chief opponent was former Deputy Prime Minister Augustine Mrema, a fiery and charismatic personality who waged a vigorous anticorruption campaign. Mrema's party, the NCCR-Mageuzi (National Convention for Construction and Reform: "Chama Cha Mageuzi") is the current extrusion of early opposition groupings, highly critical of the government's prior political monopoly, economic failure, and lassitude in rooting out corruption.

In the parliamentary elections, the five principal parties accounted for 98 percent of the seats and just over 95 percent of the vote, with the CCM winning 186 of the elected seats (some are assigned by nomination); the CUF won 24 seats and the NCCR-Mageuzi 16. The lineup for all the seats in the National Assembly shows the opposition with 60 total and CCM with 214. With about 40 percent of the vote, the opposition received 22 percent of the seats, an outcome due to the single-member, first-past-the-post voting system.

The CCM is having trouble transforming itself from a vanguard into a mass party. Internally it is still governed by a 170-member National Executive Committee and a 16-member Central Committee. Its chairman is Mkapa, maintaining the tradition of unifying the leadership of party and government. Although liberal reform is the official policy and "self-reliance" remains a billboard slogan, the party's "socialism" has not been buried. (Many members blame Tanzania's economic decline on international trade factors, over which they have little control, and the thinning ranks of sympathetic foreigners.)

The Zanzibar issue rankles. The CCM is divided as to how far to extend an olive branch to the CUF, which has overwhelming support in Pemba and is supported by half or more of the archipelago's total population. Zanzibar President Amour's victory reflects class fears in Unguja, where peasants worry about a return of nationalized plantations to Arab

ownership or a reversal of their breakup. Opposition figures have wondered why Nyerere, if he can attempt to mediate in Burundi, cannot do the same in Zanzibar. Mwinyi, Nyerere, and Mkapa quietly explored a government of national unity there at the end of 1995. Unrest and protests, especially on Pemba, continued through last year.

## SELF-RELIANCE IN THE 1990S

Tanzania remains fragile, but it is not crumbling. Rulings in the recent spate of election petitions suggest that the judiciary is growing more independent, and two former ministers have lost their seats over violations of the election rules. In the civil sector, Mkapa is sponsoring training programs for journalists and judges and citizenship and civil rights village-outreach activities. Forecasts for the economy are improving as well. Growth is now projected at 5 percent this year, and 6 percent in 1999; inflation is down from 25 percent to 19 percent.

This optimistic portrait of Tanzania's economic future is based in part on a renewed influx of foreign aid. The end of 1996 marked the renewal of IMF credits flowing from a new expanded structural adjustment fund: \$234 million in special drawing rights, available semiannually, to coincide with progress in economic reforms to 1999. These credits were augmented when the World Bank approved an additional \$100 million, largely for a new road program. If replenished regularly, this program will stretch to 10 years. The Paris Club of lending countries is expected to restructure Tanzania's debt. A November 1996 investors' forum produced plans for \$786 million of projects. Direct investment inflows are rising. Yet the late 1990s may be Tanzania's last chance for priority attention by international creditors. The goal of self-reliance acquires ever more meaning.

Economic decline, the effects of liberalizing the economy, and the contestation opportunities of multiparty democracy create multiple wedges in Tanzania's ethos of cultural unity. In the context of the Great Lakes crisis, however, and in comparative African terms, Tanzania's tattered legacy of peaceful political change and national cultural integration, coupled with a "new broom" leadership and a slight upturn in economic activity, may allow the government to overcome the present discontents. To achieve this will require more political magnanimity toward the opposition, continuously expanding and institutionalizing efforts to fight corruption, and decisive measures of further economic liberalization. ■

"South Africans are beginning to expect the same things from their political system—jobs, order, peace—that are the norm elsewhere. Ten years from now, the stability of South Africa will depend not on increasingly distant memories of success in avoiding apocalypse, but on the implementation of a new political order, proper economic policies, a plausible ideology, and new norms and mechanisms for the preservation of order."

## South Africa: The Perils of Normalcy

ANTOINETTE HANDLEY AND JEFFREY HERBST

**A**fter more than a thousand days with Nelson Mandela as president, South Africa is entering the postheroic phase of its history. President Mandela will give up his leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) later this year as a prelude to leaving office at the end of his five-year term in 1999. In many ways, South Africa is becoming a normal country: it is moving away from its "constitutional moment," and the government is increasingly focusing on the mundane but critical issues of how to promote economic growth and restore order.

Of course, a unique history of institutionalized white rule and apartheid means South Africa will never be like any other country. However, over the past three years an entire set of monumental questions about the future has been moved off the agenda. The country has avoided race war and armageddon, has committed itself to a one-person, one-vote system with no special privileges for racial groups, and has described a comprehensive set of rights to be enjoyed by all. Four important aspects of the new South Africa are at various stages of transformation: the constitution and national political structures, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the economy, and the promotion of order. The differential progress on these issues highlights a fundamental fact: good and bad news will continue to emanate from South Africa for some time, and almost any outlook—from giddy optimism to gloom—can be supported by focusing on a particular problem.

### THE NEW CONSTITUTION

The final step in South Africa's formal transition process, the inauguration of the new constitution, was celebrated this February. The ceremony, suffused with symbolism, took place at Sharpeville on what is celebrated in South Africa as International Human Rights Day. In blazing sunshine, President Mandela raised the constitution above his head and danced for joy just a few kilometers from where the 1910 Act of Union was signed (establishing a racially exclusive state), and close to where 69 anti-apartheid demonstrators were killed by police in 1960.

The new constitution is the result of six years of negotiation and some 2 million submissions from the public. It was ratified, the second time around, by the Constitutional Court, whose task was to determine whether the text complied with the 34 constitutional principles agreed on by negotiators during the transition.

The key constitutional debate concerned the provinces and their relationship with the center. Smaller parties argued that the powers granted to the provinces in the final version of the constitution were watered down from what had been agreed to originally. While the court concurred, it ruled in December 1996 that the disparity was not sufficient to warrant a refusal to certify. Overall, the constitution creates a relatively unitary system, although limited powers (regarding language of instruction, for example) are devolved to the regions. It remains to be seen whether these powers will give rise to greater regional assertiveness.

The Inkatha Freedom Party has long had grievances about the way in which the relationship between the provinces and the center was being resolved. In 1995 the party walked out of constitu-

---

ANTOINETTE HANDLEY is director of studies at the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg. JEFFREY HERBST is an associate professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School.



tional negotiations after the ANC refused to honor a commitment made just before the 1994 general elections to solicit international mediation on the question of regional powers. Despite some last-minute wavering, Inkatha remained outside the formal constitution-making process, although the party pledged to accept the court's ruling.

The constitution has been relatively well received by legal scholars. The document's emphasis on protecting individual rights represents a substantial advance for South Africa, whose citizens now enjoy a greater degree of freedom and constitutional protection than at any time in the country's history. A number of rights are subject to limitation. Free speech, for example, is limited by the outlawing of "hate speech" and propaganda for war. The right of employers to lock out striking workers was struck down. Similarly, the right to own property is subject to the need to redress past discrimination. Throughout, the concerns of the new South Africa, one of the most unequal societies on earth, are evident.

The court's ratification of the new constitution was swiftly followed by the withdrawal of the National Party (NP) from the government of national unity. After initial dismay, analysts hailed the move as part of the "normalization" of South African politics that would allow the emergence of an opposition party system. While the NP is currently the official opposition (with 82 of 400 seats in the national assembly), it does not display much flair for the role: the party frequently appears torn between the need to transform itself into a moderate, federalist party and the knee-jerk reflex to defend its own (even those guilty of human rights abuses). In many respects it is the rigorous but diminutive Democratic Party (DP) that is emerging as the *de facto* opposition, even developing a "shadow" budget. (The DP has refused an offer from Mandela to become part of the governing coalition, arguing that this would compromise its ability to act as a critical opposition.) Nonetheless, the DP, like the NP, remains trapped within a narrow constituency. With Inkatha struggling to be something more than a regional party, and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) floundering amid leadership squabbles, there is little likelihood of a significant challenge to the ANC's dominance in the 1999 elections.

The most interesting politicking therefore happens in party circles. The ANC has been subject to a number of internal battles, featuring populist or regional "renegades." At present, the emphasis on transparency and the lively nature of internal democracy in the ANC ensure that the issues of the

day receive a thorough hearing. There is no guarantee, of course, that in a system that grants significant powers to the party bosses such practices will continue. The relatively open and responsive nature of South Africa's new democracy may be tested in times to come.

## RECONCILIATION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created in June 1995 by an act of parliament to "establish as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature, and extent of the gross violations of human rights" committed between the banning of the ANC in March 1960 and Mandela's inauguration in May 1994. The commission has two tasks: to give the victims of past human rights abuses a voice, and to entice the perpetrators of such abuses into telling what they know by dangling a potential amnesty.

In its early days the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concentrated on the victims and brought, nightly, mind-numbing stories of human cruelty into the living rooms of South Africans. Predictably, many of the stories concerned the excesses of apartheid security forces—but the ordinary faces doing the telling and the brutality of much of the behavior shocked white South Africans, accustomed to thinking of their "boys in blue" in a more benign light. But the commission was also careful to hear testimony from the "other side," including the parents of a white conscript who died during South Africa's "border" war in Namibia, and the sister of South Africa's first necklacing victim. Their stories were a poignant reminder of how very far the new nation had come.

Although disparagingly dubbed the "Kleenex Commission" for the ubiquitous tears of victims and their loved ones, the significance of the victims' hearings should not be downplayed; but the real test for the commission may lie in what it manages to uncover about the perpetrators.

The commission has begun to sketch a picture of human rights abuses from 1960 to 1994. Much of the testimony demonstrates that the police operated within a culture that considered the murder of political opponents and criminals legitimate. The involvement of security forces in the death of numerous activists and the existence of procedures to identify "targets for elimination" have been confirmed. There is also evidence of cabinet-level complicity in instances of abuse, including reports that former President F. W. de Klerk knew of "Third Force" activities and that the officials he assigned to deal with the accusations were themselves implicated.

While much has been learned about police atrocities, little has emerged on the role of the South African Defense Force. Leading figures who served in the former SADF have specifically called on soldiers not to apply for amnesty. There is a more general concern that the top officials of the old regime will not confess and that there will not be enough evidence, or the political will, to prosecute them.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has also been damaged by allegations that it is reluctant to investigate abuses committed by members of the liberation movements. Concerns about partiality have been exacerbated by the commission's inability to deal satisfactorily with the violence in Kwazulu / Natal province. It may be that this subject is more sensitive than others because the violence continues, albeit at significantly lower levels than in the past.

Fears of partiality by the commission are a response to a school of thought that the evil of apartheid justified the "excesses" of the liberation movements—and that the abuses committed by those fighting for democracy cannot be equated with those committed in defense of apartheid. Thus far, the commission has appeared firm in its resolve to treat all abuse equally.

What is the likelihood of the commission contributing to national reconciliation? One survey found, unsurprisingly, that considerably more whites than blacks expressed skepticism about the commission. This may reflect whites' fears that they are the commission's target. However, another study showed that most South Africans were concerned that the commission would exacerbate tensions and feelings of anger between the races in the short term, a view held irrespective of race, language, or age group. The second survey also found that more people felt that the commission's activities would enable South Africans to live together more easily in the long run.

This does not mean that attempts to promote national reconciliation have been entirely unsuccessful. The ANC government has been at pains not to alienate Afrikaners. Mandela's donning of a captain's jersey when South Africa won the rugby World Cup endeared him to thousands of conservative white rugby supporters. The Freedom Front, a right-wing coalition, has been successfully incorporated into the new political dispensation. In return, Mandela agreed that government would fund the Volkstaat Council, a statutory body established to make recommendations on the viability of an Afrikaner homeland.

A more serious problem may be Inkatha's estrangement from the political mainstream. Mandela's appointment of Mangosuthu Buthelezi as acting president while he and Deputy Thabo Mbeki were attending the World Economic Forum was a masterstroke—another example of the reconciliatory gesture at which Mandela is so skilled. Nonetheless, fundamental disagreements over the powers of the provinces and "traditional leaders" remain unresolved. Reconciliation, if it is to endure, must move beyond symbols and will mean little if the causes of conflict are not dealt with.

## DIVIDED ON THE ECONOMY

The new government inherited an extraordinary set of economic problems in 1994. Fifty-three percent of Africans live below the poverty line, compared to 2 percent of all whites. There were immediate demands to do something about the millions of unemployed; there were also demands to institute supplemental feeding programs for the 2.3 million people, including 1 million children, who were malnourished; begin programs to help the estimated 12 million people without adequate water supplies; and help electrify the homes of the 80 percent of all Africans without power. The economy had experienced negative growth between 1990 and 1992, and businesses were barely investing enough to replace their capital stock. Over the previous decade, South Africans had divested from their own economy through continual capital flight. The ANC needed to reverse these trends, and at the same time restructure the economy to make it more outward-looking and efficient.

The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), the ANC's initial economic plan, was adopted in 1994. The RDP was a long list of social programs designed to redress past imbalances; it aimed to meet "the basic needs of the people—jobs, land, housing, water, electricity, telecommunications, transport, a clean and healthy environment, nutrition, health care, and social welfare." Much less emphasis was placed on economic growth; indeed, restructuring the economy to promote efficiency was downplayed. An integral part of the RDP was the creation of an RDP ministry, funded by a tax on each ministry's total budget, to spearhead programs that met basic human needs.

The roughly 3 percent economic growth rate during 1994 and 1995 was a marked improvement over the previous several years of economic decline. However, by the middle of 1996 the government had become convinced that even the improved eco-

conomic trajectory was inadequate. The expensive social agenda of the RDP suggested that the government, on the current growth path, would not be able to deliver its promises. In addition, having the RDP ministry separate from the line ministries actually providing services proved to be extremely awkward.

Most important, after a brief spurt of giddiness about growing again, it became obvious that 3 percent was not good enough for South Africa. The government realized that if the economy grew by only 3 percent annually, unemployment would rise an additional 5 percentage points to 37 percent by the year 2000. Also, the rand experienced a series of crises during 1996 that saw its value against the United States dollar drop more than 20 percent.

In June 1996, the government announced the end of the RDP at the national level; RDP projects would be funded and administered by the line ministers (such as health, education, housing, and water). Also, the government formalized its commitment to growth with the release of a document entitled *Growth, Employment and Redistribution: A Macroeconomic Strategy*. The document, with its emphasis on the need to achieve 6 percent annual growth and further reform the economy, was a sharp break in tone and substance from the RDP. If the document was not written by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, it was certainly designed to gain their approval.

The GEAR document, as it quickly became known, also marked a change in the relationship between the ANC and its junior coalition partners, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Gone was the commitment to consultation that was a key feature of the RDP. Instead, the change in strategy was announced without much in the way of prior consultation, and Finance Minister Trevor Manuel proclaimed that much of the document was simply "nonnegotiable." The response was swift: COSATU complained that the alliance "seems to be paralyzed by the threat of globalization and the investment strike of business." The unions implied that Mandela's program was "Thatcherite"—fighting words in South Africa.

It would be unfair to say that the government had abandoned its effort to redress past inequalities. In a February 1997 address to parliament, Mandela was able to point to programs that provide school lunches for 3 million children, celebrate the fact that 700,000 people had been provided with

potable water (with 6 million more to benefit soon), and announce that a greater number of houses were being built than at any time in the country's history. Still, the GEAR document was deliberately aimed at lowering expectations, and marked a maturing of the government's approach after the ebullience of the transition.

The rift between the ANC and its allies highlights what is in many ways the fundamental question of South Africa's political economy: can the organizations that fought apartheid together now govern together? The ANC is inevitably pulled in the direction of a low-wage economy that will benefit the millions of unemployed South Africans. In contrast, COSATU represents almost 2 million workers who, while hardly doing well, are actually highly paid by South African standards and who are not, by international standards, especially productive.

For the moment the unions have nowhere to go, and there are few indications that they would risk running against the still very popular ANC as a new social democratic party. Nevertheless, it appears inevitable that union protest will be a growing problem for the ANC in the years to come, with the potential to disrupt economic plans designed to convince investors, both foreign and domestic, that the country is stable and will yield high returns.

Perhaps more important, the dispute over GEAR makes clear that the government has yet to define its economic ideology and has failed to develop a consensus on where the economy is going. It is obvious what the new South Africa is not: it is not racist, it is not sexist, and it is not run by the old National Party. It is also increasingly clear that South Africa is not socialist. However, no one in the ANC has declared that South Africa will be capitalist. There was not until now a need to develop a postapartheid economic ideology, because the first election was about the past and since then the government has been busy dealing with the immediate problems of the political and economic transition. However, as it seeks to make more dramatic changes and prepares for the 1999 election, the ANC will have to be more forthright on what South Africa is to become in the years ahead.

At this point, the ANC is itself unclear about its economic orientation. Overall economic management has been extremely conservative: the government has succeeded in reducing deficit spending and has, without too much protest, stood by while the Reserve Bank followed a tight money policy.

---

*Can the  
organizations  
that fought  
apartheid  
together now  
govern  
together?*

---



However, the government and the ANC seem ambivalent about microeconomic liberalization, especially privatization. Investors, of course, pick up on the ambiguity and do not feel compelled to embrace South Africa.

## ORDER AND DISORDER

South Africans are obsessed with crime, as well they might be: the murder rate is 10 times that of the United States and robbery is a constant concern. Vigilantes who publicly execute drug dealers are widely applauded. Fear of crime is deterring some foreign investment, and there is evidence that the country's violent reputation is hurting the tourist industry.

The hysterical view that all of South Africa is under siege from crime is not correct. Crime is worst in Johannesburg, where the wave of violent assaults and car hijackings has destroyed the city center. While not acceptable, the crime situation in other parts of the country is much better.

The causes of the current crime wave are complex. Especially in urban areas, poor black populations, often without adequate food, water, and shelter, coexist with a white society whose lifestyle is modeled on Europe and the United States. South Africa is also very much a society in transition, where the old institutions and notions of order have been overthrown but new norms of legitimacy are only slowly being created. Add the nearly ubiquitous presence of guns—available at low prices now that the wars around South Africa have ended and the borders have become more open—and it would be surprising if South Africa did not face a significant crime problem.

One of the greatest tragedies of apartheid, the presence of an entire generation that was not educated during the 1980s, further aggravates crime. The angry young men who heeded the call to boycott school and are now illiterate know that they will not benefit from the country's transition until after everyone else; these men have little to lose and much to gain from theft. As Nelson Mandela himself said shortly before the transition, "The youths in the townships have had over the decades a visible enemy, the government. Now that enemy is no longer visible, because of the transformation that is taking place. Their enemy now is you and me, people who drive a car and have a house. It's order, anything that relates to order, and it is a very grave situation."

The police force seems incapable of confronting the crime problem. As the repressive arm of the old

white-run state, the police have necessarily been the subject of a considerable effort to transform organizational structures and instill a new ethos. However, such radical change has made it exceptionally difficult to design and implement a comprehensive anticrime package. The police are also suffering from the national effort to instill budget discipline after years of overspending.

Finally, lawlessness is nothing new in South Africa. The apartheid governments ruled large swaths of the country, especially black urban areas, by simply withdrawing and containing the inhabitants so that they would not pose a threat to the nearby white areas. These "no-go" zones were run in good part by gangsters who could easily outgun the police. To some extent the Mandela government is simply confronting problems of order that the previous government was willing to ignore as long as whites were not affected.

Some aspects of the crime wave will be addressed once the police force is transformed and the government allocates the resources needed to fight increasingly sophisticated crime syndicates. However, the government also faces some unique problems for which there are no ready-made answers. Above all, the Mandela administration must restore an ethic of lawfulness after many years in which the ANC encouraged people not to obey the white authorities. Early results are not good. For example, the government has not convinced many in urban areas to pay their rents (rent avoidance was for many years a tactic in the fight against apartheid). Indeed, in some areas rent collection rates are actually lower than during white rule. Such a general ethic of disobedience creates an encouraging climate for crime.

## CONSOLIDATING LIBERATION

Normal countries have different expectations than those on the brink of catastrophe. Precisely because of the extraordinary amount accomplished in the last few years, South Africans are beginning to expect the same things from their political system—jobs, order, peace—that are the norm elsewhere. Ten years from now, the stability of South Africa will depend not on increasingly distant memories of success in avoiding apocalypse, but on the implementation of a new political order, proper economic policies, a plausible ideology, and new norms and mechanisms for the preservation of order. The tremendous amount that has been achieved in South Africa is but a prelude to an uncertain, demanding—yet still promising—future. ■

A new configuration of power, founded on the pillars of commercial partnership, is being constructed atop the rubble of traditional government in Sierra Leone. It, and the rest of "post-cold war Africa [are] at the vanguard of a violent passage to a new world of minimal government and globalized commerce."

## Privatizing War in Sierra Leone

WILLIAM RENO

Overpopulation, migration, environmental degradation, economic instability, and the breakdown of social cohesion—all the factors that led American journalist Robert Kaplan to call Sierra Leone a case study in lawlessness—appear to render conflict in that country impervious to conventional methods of diplomacy. Brigands and "sobels" (soldiers turned rebels) roam the countryside, recruiting children as young as 10 as fighters. Together with insurgents from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), they loot villages and farms, mine diamonds, and smuggle goods.

The outlook for democracy would seem bleak. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, elected president in March 1996 in Sierra Leone's first multiparty election in 23 years, survived three coup attempts in his first year in office. The RUF and sobels continue to violate a cease-fire signed in November 1996, preventing deployment of UN observers to monitor the cease-fire and delaying the start of a British-funded demobilization of army and rebel fighters.

Despite appearances, Sierra Leone's descent into conflict cannot be understood as the result of environmental stress or social anomie that has overwhelmed a weak state. Rather, the fighting has been caused by the collapse of a patron-client system of politics that characterized many former colonial states, including neighboring Liberia. During the cold war, leaders in countries like Sierra Leone generally counted on aid and loans from former colonial powers and superpower benefactors to help finance patronage and pay for security forces. This outside income permitted these rulers to destroy

bureaucracies that they feared could harbor rivals. In the 1990s, however, creditors demand radical cuts in government spending and rapid deregulation of commerce in return for loans. Sierra Leone's leaders have thus faced armed opposition not only from citizens they can no longer patronize but also from army units they can no longer pay. Disgruntled former clients have provided enterprising strongmen and rogue military officers excellent opportunities to build their own followings to control the country's sources of wealth.

Without a formal army, and without bureaucracies that they might otherwise use to build legitimacy and provide for popular needs, Sierra Leone's leaders have hired the private South Africa-based Executive Outcomes military to fight their enemies. This development is important beyond Sierra Leone. It shows that rulers of extremely weak states can restructure their political systems to adapt to new post-cold war pressures and opportunities by forming partnerships with foreign firms. These partnerships offer superior means to fight wars and acquire wealth that would be unavailable to these leaders if they pursued normal routes to conflict resolution and development.

### THE DESTRUCTION OF A CONVENTIONAL STATE

Since Sierra Leone gained independence from Britain in 1961, its rulers have struggled to make a nation out of more than a dozen ethnic groups. The government has had to buy the loyalty of ethnically diverse strongmen who controlled resources and commanded authority of their own, and whose allegiance was needed for the effective exercise of power. Concerned that strongmen could use state institutions to threaten their own hold on power, Sierra Leone's rulers weakened government bureaucracies and manipulated access to resources to undercut potential challengers. For example, by

---

WILLIAM RENO, an assistant professor of political science at Florida International University in Miami, is the author of *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and the forthcoming *Warlord Politics and African States*.

1980 Siaka Stevens, the country's president from 1967 to 1985, had essentially turned over the country's diamond industry to cronies, whom he exempted from taxation. This industry once provided nearly 70 percent of the country's export earnings and a quarter of its GNP.

In 1985 the retiring president chose Joseph Momoh to succeed him in a staged election. Momoh lacked a strong independent base of personal followers, a handicap that rendered him incapable of ending the private control over Sierra Leone's wealth that many of Stevens's cronies enjoyed. The loss of official revenues crippled most state institutions. Momoh's inability to supply essential state services, or even act effectively as a personal patron, prompted many Sierra Leoneans, especially young men, to seek their fortunes in the diamond-mining areas under the control of increasingly independent strongmen.

Momoh was thus ill prepared to counter the rebel threat that appeared in March 1991 along Sierra Leone's eastern border with Liberia. Liberian warlord Charles Taylor had used the guerrilla RUF, mainly led by Sierra Leonean dissidents Taylor had met in Libya in the 1980s, as a proxy to grab economically viable parts of Sierra Leone to buy arms and pay off his own supporters. The RUF quickly became a homegrown insurgency under Foday Sankoh, a former Sierra Leone military officer who had spent six years in prison for his alleged role in a 1971 coup plot.

In response to the RUF invasion, Momoh increased the army's strength from 3,000 to 14,000 troops. This expansion came as creditors such as the World Bank and the IMF demanded that the president reduce Sierra Leone's budget deficits. Cut off from further loans until he reduced the deficits, Momoh was unable to finance his expanded army. Soldiers went unpaid and commanders, many inherited from the Stevens era, "led" from the rear, leaving young noncommissioned officers in charge of actual battle operations. Twenty-six-year-old Valentine Strasser and several other officers marched to Freetown, the capital, overthrowing Momoh on April 29, 1992.

As president, Strasser found himself in even more dire straits than his predecessor. He tried to use his youth and military origins to appeal to young Sierra Leoneans. Sporting wraparound sunglasses, Strasser billed himself the "Redeemer" and encouraged expression of national pride by sponsoring political murals in the capital. The war, however, continued to take its toll; by early 1995

the country's finance minister estimated that battling the rebels consumed 75 percent of government spending. Strasser could hardly finance a loyal and efficient military, much less deliver on his many popular promises to provide state services to young Sierra Leoneans, so he turned to short-term crisis management. The new strategy included executing prisoners in Freetown's Pademba Road Prison for allegedly plotting a coup from behind bars in order to signal his resolve to other would-be rivals. This only worsened the country's financial situation when it drew international condemnation and delayed desperately needed aid from overseas.

Rebels also cut off Strasser's regime from its last major domestic source of revenue by early 1995. RUF guerrillas attacked foreigners at Sierra Rutile's titanium oxide mine and at SIEROMCO, a Swiss-owned bauxite mine. These attacks ended production at both mines, which had accounted for 15 percent of GNP and in 1994 supplied 57 percent of the country's official export earnings. A combination of RUF fighters, sobels, rogue military commanders, and strongmen controlled a clandestine diamond and agricultural trade valued at around \$200 million, while government domestic revenues totaled only \$60 million in 1994 and 1995.

## ENTER EXECUTIVE OUTCOMES

Sierra Leone's patron-client networks broke down at the same time South Africa was beginning to struggle with restructuring its economy and reducing state expenditures. While South Africa's new government of national unity, elected in April 1994, wrestled with the dilemma of how to dismantle the apartheid-era security establishment, elements of South Africa's military found new commercial opportunities. Thus EO recruited employees from the 32 Buffalo Battalion, the unit once charged with aiding Angola's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebels. This gave them salable counterinsurgency skills. EO head Eeban Barlow's previous stint with South Africa's Civil Cooperation Bureau, designed to counter anti-apartheid activists and seek out sanctions-busting commercial contacts, gave him ties to a global network that he could use to procure arms and skilled employees.

Strasser called EO in April 1995. Within two weeks, EO cleared rebels from the Freetown area. EO conquered the main diamond-mining areas in July and August 1995, removing rogue military units along with rebels. Since then, the South African



firm has trained Kamajos, or local self-defense units, to replace the unreliable Sierra Leone army.

EO's competitive advantage in Sierra Leone lies in its close ties to Branch Mining, a British-based firm. Because the government is always on the verge of bankruptcy, EO has found it extremely useful to have a relationship with this mining firm, which produces gems. Branch Mining's commitment of \$80 million to develop a kimberlite diamond mine in the heart of contested areas in Sierra Leone brought in a regime ally that would pay for mutually beneficial security and help solve the regime's serious revenue crunch.

Recognizing the threat factionalism in the army posed both to the Strasser regime and to Branch Mining, EO worked only with politically reliable officers in EO's counterinsurgency campaign. This collaboration helped strengthen a hard-line doctrine among some in the military that counterinsurgency wars can be fought and won, even in weak states like Sierra Leone. Their partnership with EO also gave these officers privileged access to diamonds; several began their own mining operations or partnerships with small foreign firms given concessions under the EO security umbrella.

One hard-liner, Julius Maada Bio, removed Strasser in a January 1996 palace coup after it appeared that Strasser might run as a civilian in upcoming elections; Bio and his associates feared that Strasser might dominate local mining operations as an elected president. The change in rulers did not, however, disturb the alliance between the Free-town regime and its new foreign partners. Executive Outcomes created enough stability to attract other foreign investors in the mining industry. Subsequent official revenue and debt payments produced good relations with creditors, who granted a 20 percent reduction in the country's foreign debt in 1995 and 1996, bringing it under \$1 billion for the first time in five years. EO's presence gave the government the security to continue laying off a third of the country's civil service, as creditors demanded. Most important, the firm's successful offensives brought enough stability to permit nationwide elections in March 1996 that brought Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to power. The election of Kabbah, a former UN official, created considerable global goodwill and legitimacy that translated into a threefold increase in bilateral aid in 1996, compared to 1994.

## THE COSTS OF PRIVATE SECURITY

The apparent price of security for a centralized government organization in Sierra Leone is between \$3 million and \$4 million a month, plus the cost of weapons that EO and Life Guard, a firm closely associated with EO that currently provides security services in Sierra Leone, need to arm an effective private army. That the government can mortgage natural resources it otherwise would not control to pay for the military aid makes EO even more of a bargain. The firm's military offensives against the RUF were instrumental in bringing RUF leader Sankoh to the negotiating table. On November 30, 1996, Sankoh and President Kabbah signed a draft peace treaty in Abidjan, Ivory Coast's capital, but not before EO had destroyed all major rebel bases in Sierra Leone.

Some observers endorse using private militaries like EO in place of politically risky military aid from foreign states. However, the case of Sierra Leone

highlights some of the costs of farming out essential state military and revenue tasks to foreign firms. First, EO plays an autonomous role in Sierra Leonean politics—at the expense of individuals who originally contracted the firm's services. For example, EO did not support Strasser when he appeared to renege on holding a scheduled election. In turn, EO's presence gave Kabbah enough security to force Bio into exile in April 1996. And in September 1996, 20 senior officers were forced to take "educational leave" abroad.

By backing the elections that brought Kabbah to power, EO hoped to legitimate its presence in Sierra Leone as a firm capable of supplying the security needed for a transition to civilian rule; it tied its services to the attainment of the outward form of democratic government that creditors and other outsiders were anxious to promote. EO has tried to present itself as an alternative peacekeeping force that is filling the gap left by the UN. Ultimately, it protects only those who have money or the power to award mining concessions; those who have neither quickly lose EO's protection.

Cashiering military officers under the EO security umbrella may promote short-term stability in Sierra Leone, but it also creates a need for protection that will never end. Armed men are left without work and Kamajos are becoming a new, nonstate military. In September and October 1996, Kamajos clashed with regular army soldiers caught looting near the provincial capital of Kenema. Kamajos have also

---

*The "citizens"  
of EO...are  
foreign  
shareholders  
who expect  
operations to  
turn a profit.*

---

battled Jombolas, a rival irregular local militia in the diamond fields that protects freelance illicit mining by local residents.

Kabbah is unable to control the Kamajo fighters, who owe their status and allegiance to EO. As long as the government is unable to cultivate legitimacy by providing for basic needs, and as long as it cannot collect revenue or define a distinct state interest, armies will remain private affairs in Sierra Leone and will exist as the tool of a powerful patron, foreign or local.

The apparent coincidence of interests between EO and advocates of civilian rule obscures another important aspect of the firm's presence. EO and its partners rely on political instability as a market issue. EO's presence makes it possible to establish a corporate web of allied mining, engineering, medical, transport, and even tourist firms that have grown out of the former South African security forces and new entrepreneurs. With EO to protect them, they have learned to do business in places that more conventional firms would avoid. The government's dependence on the firm for security permits these investors to negotiate favorable deals that exclude serious competitors. Thus, EO's presence is pivotal in maintaining a new political-commercial network that rules in place of an indigenous bureaucracy.

Who are the real bosses of the commercial networks that become deeply insinuated into the economic and political life of a country that hires a private military? Elements of the commercial network in Sierra Leone provide not only security and mining revenue, but also logistics, infrastructure, and other services. Citizens may benefit from the private provision of these services, which Sierra Leone's government cannot provide. But the "citizens" of EO and its partners that perform state functions are foreign shareholders who expect operations to turn a profit. Profit, not promotion of democracy, is the real business of EO. It is not insignificant, and it is a boon to EO public relations, that making money may sometimes coincide with the loftier aim of providing local security or buffering civilian rulers. Nor is conflict resolution ultimately in the commercial network's interests, since this would open economies to competition from larger, more efficient competitors.

Regime reliance on EO does nothing to address the overall cause of conflict: the organized reaction of Sierra Leoneans to their abandonment by patrons. Serious rebel disturbances, even after highly suc-

cessful military offensives against the RUF, indicate that insecurity will remain a problem for Kabbah and his successors. At best, EO's intervention establishes a holding pattern; more likely, its operation as part of a larger syndicate will worsen the situation. EO's mining partners have an interest in fencing off valuable zones to keep interlopers out. But doing this further squeezes those Sierra Leoneans who can expect nothing from government and who have relied on illicit mining to survive.

Close ties between commercial networks and state officials with significant stakes in these operations are an additional concern. Sierra Leone's government reportedly owns 30 percent of Branch Mining's subsidiary. Local politicians have stakes in side deals in smaller concession sites. Insider dealing is hardly new to Sierra Leone. Deals with EO partners are different, however, since firms that coordinate their activities and investments with EO and favored politicians can combine a much wider array of capabilities than in the past, both within the country and through global commercial ties, for mutual profit.

### **AUTHORITY PRIVATIZED**

EO and its partners give politicians the option to jettison old, inefficient, but more inclusive patronage networks for efficient, powerful, and profitable commercial networks to boost their personal power. This has destroyed the old balance of power between a self-interested ruler's capabilities and the ability of local societies to bargain or resist unwanted intrusions. The new network (with local partners) replaces tattered government as the center of authority.

Since their mode of operation blurs the boundaries between state and corporate interests, firms like EO undermine the ability of global organizations to regulate trade. New military firms like Panasec Strategic Concept, Stuart Mills, Bridge Resources, Corporate Trading International, and Omega Support, Ltd., have emerged out of the privatizing South African security network. They are only a few of an estimated 90 private armies operating in Africa. Some are part of Branch-EO's corporate web and some, like the American company Military Professional Resources, are fierce competitors in places like Angola. Post-cold war Africa is at the vanguard of a violent passage to a new world of minimal government and globalized commerce, not, as Kaplan writes, a throwback to hatreds resulting from a failure to manage change. ■

"Although it has been severely jolted by the killings during Ramadan, the government has nonetheless stuck to its long-term plan to hold parliamentary elections this spring. What is to be expected in the near term politically—from these elections and on the military front? Will the next round of elections unleash yet another spasm of violence?"

## Algeria: The Dialectic of Elections and Violence

ROBERT MORTIMER

For Algeria, Islam's holiest month became a "Ramadan of blood" this January. Since the cancellation of parliamentary elections in January 1992, violent opposition forces have sought to discredit the governing military regime by escalating the level of bloodshed during a period that is supposed to be given over to abstinence, prayer, and spirituality. In 1996, Ramadan fell two months after a presidential election held under dubious circumstances; in the course of the month, terrorists blew up hospitals, city halls, and newspaper offices in some of the most deadly attacks of the entire civil war.

This year Ramadan began six weeks after the regime pushed through a highly questionable constitutional referendum. In a twisted irony, elections and violence have been explosively linked in Algeria over the past half-decade: an ill-conceived democratization process gone murderously awry.

### ELECTORAL DIPLOMACY

Liamine Zeroual, who was appointed president in January 1994 by the military, initially seemed intent on negotiating a political settlement to Algeria's crisis with the imprisoned leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). A retired general, Zeroual had aligned himself with the more moderate faction of a divided military leadership split between "eradicators" and "conciliators." In September 1994, following secret contacts, Zeroual released FIS leaders Abassi Madani and Ali Benhadj to house arrest in the hope that they would call for a truce in the

armed hostilities that had already caused between 25,000 and 30,000 casualties (today the toll is well over 60,000, with some observers placing the number as high as 100,000). After nearly six weeks of inconclusive and apparently halfhearted talks, Zeroual declared at the end of October that the Islamist leaders had rejected his offer of dialogue. He announced that the government was ending the talks and would move instead to conduct presidential elections in 1995 in an attempt to resolve the political impasse.

Restoration of the electoral process has been a central issue in Algerian politics since its disruption in January 1992. In December 1991, the FIS won 188 of 430 parliamentary seats in the first round of a scheduled two-round legislative election. The debate since then has not been over whether to conduct elections but over the conditions under which they will be held. One key issue has been whether the FIS, officially outlawed by the government in 1992, should be allowed to participate. Another has been the order in which the elections should be held; most of the opposition parties place priority on parliamentary elections, not only because it was their annulment that triggered the disorder but also on the grounds that the National Assembly best represents Algeria's diversity.

The presidential election unfolded in a highly charged political atmosphere. The three major parties that had garnered nearly 80 percent of the vote in the 1991 parliamentary elections were absent from the process. These parties—the FIS, the National Liberation Front (FLN), and the Socialist Forces Front (FFS)—had come together with several lesser parties in Rome in January 1995 to issue a platform that challenged the government to restore

---

ROBERT MORTIMER is a professor of political science at Haverford College. He is a coauthor of *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), the third edition of which is forthcoming in 1998.



the FIS's political rights in exchange for a declaration that it would respect democratic rights and practices. The government dismissed the "Platform of Rome" out of hand, reiterating that the FIS was banned and would not be permitted to field a candidate in the campaign for the presidency. The FLN and the FFS eventually announced that they would boycott the election because of the exclusion of the FIS and the rampant insecurity throughout the country.

The 1995 presidential election thus took place under a cloud of skepticism. Nonetheless, three candidates did oppose General Zeroual (indeed, a dozen others mounted campaigns but were unable to gather the 75,000 signatures required to appear on the ballot). The three opposition candidates were Mahfoud Nahnah of the Movement for an Islamic Society (Hamas), deemed to be a more moderate Islamic party; Saïd Sadi, the well-known secularist leader of the largely Berber Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD); and Nouredine Boukrouh, head of the small Party for Algerian Renewal (PRA). The real question in the run-up to the election was not whether Zeroual would win, but whether there would be sufficient turnout to legitimize his victory. The ban and the boycott, along with the threat of the terrorist Armed Islamic Group (GIA) to turn the ballot box into a coffin for those who dared to vote, seemed likely to keep turnout low.

### STRONGARMING THE VOTE

On election day soldiers were posted every 20 meters around urban polling places; moreover, there were reports that the army exerted considerable pressure on people to vote. In the last weeks before the balloting, reports also circulated that the FIS was instructing its supporters to vote for Mahfoud Nahnah. Whatever the effects of these tactics, most neutral observers accepted the government's claim that large numbers of Algerians did choose to vote on November 16. According to the official count, 12 million of Algeria's 16 million registered voters cast ballots, a proportion well above the 59 percent turnout in the first round of the 1991 legislative elections.

The results showed Zeroual the victor, with 61 percent of the vote. The Ministry of the Interior announced that Nahnah received 25 percent, followed by Sadi with 9.3 percent and Boukrouh with 3.8 percent. Although FIS officials in Europe declared that the participation figures were grossly inflated, the overall political impact gave Zeroual a considerable boost. The clear message appeared to

be: "Enough of violence and political maneuvering." Zeroual won because he was seen as the most credible bulwark against extremism; this vote of confidence was primarily a mandate to negotiate an end to Algeria's strife.

Despite their reservations about the accuracy of the results, FIS representatives abroad promptly made a gesture toward Zeroual. Rabah Kebir, in exile in Germany, described the victor as a "worthy interlocutor" and said the party was open to a dialogue with the government. He added that the FIS was ready for a "comprehensive settlement negotiated between the regime and the opposition." At the same time, he called for the release of Madani and other imprisoned FIS officials as a necessary condition for fruitful talks.

Zeroual did little to respond to these gestures. Moreover, the respite from violence, the result of the extensive security surrounding the election, did not last long. While the GIA had not succeeded in disrupting the election, it promptly demonstrated that it was still a force to be reckoned with. Assassinations resumed, and on December 12, less than a month after the election, a car bomb blew up in the Algiers suburb of Ain Naadja, killing 15 people and wounding 40. Once Ramadan began in mid-January, the hostilities escalated; the February 9, 1996, *Le Monde* reported the following toll in the space of a week: "twenty civilians assassinated, in a single day in the capital and ten others kidnapped, an entire family slaughtered [*égorgée*] on the upper plateaus, eight women abducted in the Annaba region, seven others, all relatives of police officers, killed and mutilated near Jijel, eleven persons decapitated near Tipaza, a commander assassinated in Chlef, [and] six worshippers killed by a bomb in a mosque in Baraki, supposedly a 'secured' suburb of Algiers." On February 11, 18 more people perished when another car bomb struck the Maison de la Presse, which housed the offices of several major independent Algiers newspapers.

Three months after Zeroual's electoral triumph, the political-military situation had reverted to its previous intractability. The president appeared to read his victory as a consecration and not as a mandate to end the slaughter. Instead of capitalizing on his political momentum, he seemed immobilized by the extremists of both camps: the terrorists of the GIA and the "eradicators" within the military. Instead of a bold initiative that might well have been based on the Platform of Rome, he put forward a warmed-over recipe of tightly controlled "national dialogue" and constitutional engineering.

## DIALOGUES OF THE DEAF?

Throughout 1996, Zeroual held periodic meetings with representatives of political parties and civic associations, ostensibly to confer about constitutional revision. Yet the terms of this new constitution were not publicly disclosed until October 22, 1996. Only then did it become evident that the main thrust of the "reform" was to concentrate much greater power in the office of the presidency. The new text achieved this by creating a second house of parliament called the Council of the Nation. A third of its members were to be appointed by the president, with the remainder to be chosen indirectly by municipal and regional bodies. This new upper chamber had to approve, by a three-fourths vote, bills passed by the National Assembly before they became law. This effectively gave the president a veto over legislation of which he disapproved. A further provision allowed the president to legislate by decree between parliamentary sessions (as well as during a state of emergency or a suspension of the parliament).

These provisions made a mockery of the legislative branch, and went far beyond the notions of constitutional revision that had been circulating for months, such as the banning of parties based on religion or regionalism. Such a ban already existed in the 1989 law on political parties—although the government had not enforced it when the FIS filed for recognition. Neither the proclamation of Islam as the state religion nor Arabic as the official language, both of which were highlighted in foreign press coverage, constituted changes at all: these provisions already existed in the 1976 constitution. The significance of Zeroual's constitutional revision was to neutralize the legislature by extending presidential prerogatives.

Throughout 1996, Zeroual orchestrated a process of ad hoc consultations while violence continued to disrupt everyday life. Initiating his "national dialogue," he called in various political and civic leaders in April to discuss Algeria's future. In May he announced a timetable for his plans: a constitutional referendum to be held in November 1996; parliamentary elections to be scheduled sometime in the first six months of 1997; and local elections to be conducted before the end of 1997.

Several political parties promptly criticized this schedule, declaring that legislative elections should take priority and that an elected parliament should deliberate on matters of constitutional revision. The

president responded that the majority of the leaders he had consulted favored his proposals. He proceeded to organize a second round of "dialogue" and then announced that he would go ahead with a Conference of National Understanding in September.

Two of the major opposition parties, the FFS and the RCD, refused to participate in this conclave. The FFS's Hocine Ait Ahmed, Algeria's best-known champion of secular democracy, objected both to the process and the substance of constitutional revision, most notably its emasculation of the role of the parliament; for the FFS, the presidential proposals constituted nothing less than "institutionalized dictatorship." The RCD insisted that the constitution recognize Tamazight, the Berber language, alongside Arabic as one of Algeria's official languages. Meanwhile, the outlawed FIS, which was automatically excluded from the conference, announced from abroad that it would call for a truce if its leaders were freed from prison and given access to the public media.

---

*By turning the clock back on the democratization process of the early 1990s, the regime has itself destabilized Algeria.*

---

The regime nevertheless succeeded in gathering 1,000 delegates, representing the government and some elements of the legal opposition, at the conference. The FLN came under the control of its conservative wing, led by Boualem Benhamouda, who steered it back toward the government. Although Benhamouda endorsed Zeroual's propositions, figures from its reformist wing, such as former Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche, criticized the conference resolutions as evading the real issues. The moderate

Islamists of Hamas and Islamic Renaissance also agreed to attend the conference, which duly approved the presidential agenda.

Having thus engineered some semblance of backing for the proposed constitutional revisions, the government once again focused its efforts on producing maximum security in the run-up to the November 28 referendum. The GIA, though constrained by the security forces, had continued to carry out high-profile assassinations—including seven Trappist monks kidnapped from their monastery in March and beheaded in May, and the bishop of Oran, well known for his work in interfaith dialogue, who was struck down in August—as well as random terrorism (34 bus passengers arbitrarily executed at a roadblock in the south in October). As in November 1995, the government deployed large numbers of army troops and paramilitary forces in November 1996, temporarily stemming the wave of car bombs and atrocities.

## A "TENSE AND SULLEN ATMOSPHERE"

The election was conducted in what one journalist called a "tense and sullen atmosphere." Foreign correspondents generally complained about heavy "security restrictions" on their freedom to cover the polling. Algerian opposition parties, having already been denied access to the broadcast media, were not permitted to oversee the polling or counting process, nor were any foreign observers invited as monitors. What little coverage there was indicated that the polling booths, overflowing in 1995, were largely empty in 1996.

Nonetheless, the official results released by the Minister of the Interior reported that 79.8 percent (compared to 75 percent in 1995) of registered voters had gone to the polls and that 85.8 percent had voted for the new constitution. Seddik Debaili, first secretary of the FFS—which had campaigned for a vote against the constitution—declared that "Everybody knows that the figures have been manipulated, and in some places the ballot boxes stuffed in order to minimize the no votes." Saïd Sadi, whose RCD had called for abstention, also pronounced the results to be a flagrant fraud. Even Hamas, which held two minor ministries in the government, said the figures were exaggerated.

The official results acknowledged substantial regional differences in turnout and in preference that led some commentators to accept the results. Yet the exercise did little to increase the credibility of the regime. In sharp contrast to the November 1995 result, Zeroual's legitimacy was not enhanced by the process or the outcome of the referendum. His official powers, however, increased considerably.

## TERROR IN COMMAND

If the handling of the referendum was designed, as Saïd Sadi put it, to demonstrate the unassailable strength of the government, the events of the following months belied that this was the case. Indeed, the news emerged that as many as 26 people had been killed in terrorist operations on the day of the election, and violence continued in the days that followed: ambushes, car bombs, and arbitrary executions condemned the civilian population to constant insecurity. The tempo only increased with the onset of Ramadan this January, when the GIA unleashed its most deadly reign of terror yet: 150 random victims largely in and around Algiers in the first two weeks of the holy month.

What explains the GIA's ability to wreak havoc despite the determined efforts of the military to crush it? Clearly some part of the population is

complicit in the GIA's war. By banning the FIS and imprisoning its leadership, and by barring the legal opposition from the airways during the referendum campaign, by turning the clock back on the democratization process of the early 1990s, the regime has itself destabilized Algeria.

The GIA is not a strong movement—it is a desperate one wracked by internal divisions. Its leader since the summer of 1994, Djamel Zitouni, was executed by internal rivals who disagreed with his decision to kill the seven kidnapped monks last spring. His successor, Antar el-Zouabri, is yet another enraged young man whose three older brothers have already been slain in the civil war. Zouabri signed the letter received by French President Jacques Chirac after the December 1996 subway explosion in Paris that appeared to resume the campaign of GIA bombings that had terrorized France in 1995. Some reports claim that Zouabri has already yielded leadership to Slimane Maherzy, a veteran of both Afghanistan and Bosnia. Harassed by the security forces and volatile within, the GIA has been reduced to the most barbaric forms of terrorism. But it holds on to its sympathizers and recruits by exploiting the political void created by the regime itself.

Barely a day passed during the Ramadan of 1997 without reports of a bombing or a massacre. In December, Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia had declared that Islamist terrorism was a spent force, reduced to a residual status. The carnage of the days following was thus doubly damaging to the regime. Toward the end of January, Zeroual took to the airwaves to denounce the "bands of criminals, traitors, and mercenaries manipulated by external circles who are using savagery to serve foreign interests."

However savage the methods and whatever transnational contacts the GIA drew on, Zeroual's speech missed the mark in emphasizing foreign interests. Algeria's violence is homegrown, a consequence of deep internal problems that have been exacerbated by disillusionment with the president's policies, by the "historically unprecedented masquerade" of the constitutional referendum and the desire "to run the country like a barracks," as Aït Ahmed recently put it. The perception that Zeroual had squandered the opportunities for political reconstruction afforded by his 1995 victory was widespread. The "masquerade" could not hide the failure to get at the root of the problem: the need to forge a pact that would guarantee civil liberties while allowing the expression of the full range of views present in Algerian civil society.



Although it has been severely jolted by the killings during Ramadan, the government has nonetheless stuck to its long-term plan to hold parliamentary elections this spring. What is to be expected in the near term politically—from these elections and on the military front? Will the next round of elections unleash yet another spasm of violence?

### WHO WILL STOP THE “MASQUERADE”?

Despite the new constitution's emasculation of parliament, the National Assembly represents the only opportunity for the opposition parties to acquire a foothold in Algeria's institutions of government. They will presumably seek to demonstrate their popular following in the election, but the conditions surrounding their participation have already been rendered complicated. The government has put forward new regulations that will require several parties to reconstitute themselves officially. For example, Hamas and Islamic Renaissance were told that they must strike the reference to Islam from their names. Even the RCD was ordered to delete “Culture”—as synonymous with “Berber culture”—in order to comply with the new constitutional ban on religious, linguistic, and regional parties. Parties will have to show at new constitutive conventions that they have at least 16 delegates from at least 25 *wilayas*, or departments. Another provision requires that party leaders reside regularly in Algeria (a requirement apparently aimed at Hocine Ait Ahmed, who is often abroad for security reasons). Parties will have to be recertified in accordance with these criteria in order to present candidates.

If these regulations hamper the opposition, President Zeroual also faces some problems. While he seemed to have succeeded in recovering a faction of the FLN as pro-government last year when Mehri was ousted from the party leadership, he is said to have been dissatisfied with the performance of the FLN during the campaign for the referendum. In January, he turned to Abdelhak Benhamouda, the staunchly anti-Islamist leader of the Algerian labor movement, to form a new “centrist” party to back the presidency. No sooner did Benhamouda announce that he would resign as head of the General Union of Algerian Workers than he was gunned down in front of the union headquarters on January 28, a few days after Zeroual's eradicationist speech.

A new terrorist group calling itself the Islamic Front of Armed Jihad claimed the assassination although, as is so often the case in Algiers, rumors

that Benhamouda had been double-crossed promptly began to circulate. Zeroual then selected Abdel Kader Ben Salah, a former diplomat who has been serving as head of the nonelected National Council of Transition, to direct his newly formed party, the Democratic National Rally. Observers speculated, however, that the president might be forced into some kind of “cohabitation” (on the Turkish model of an Islamist prime minister and a secular head of state) with Mahfoud Nahnah.

Meanwhile, the instability in Algeria has posed a policy conundrum for other Muslim states, France, and the United States. Most have cautiously supported the Zeroual government; some have tentatively advanced calls for a genuine dialogue that includes all parties prepared to renounce violence (presumably including the FIS). Certainly Tunisia and Morocco do not want radical Islamists to come to power in Algeria, nor do France and the United States. Because the Algerian regime itself is so hostile to any sign of foreign intervention, the United States and France have tended to watch warily rather than undertake sustained initiatives, as some Algerians (notably Ait Ahmed)—and some non-Algerian voices—have urged. Algeria's violence is symptomatic of a deep crisis in the regime, but not its imminent overthrow. The woes of Ramadan in and around the capital were in part the consequence of a retreat and regrouping of armed fanatics in the urban Islamist neighborhoods and the “green” or Islamist suburbs. The extreme methods of the security forces have weakened the terrorists, but they have not “eradicated” them. Moreover, these methods have done nothing to erase the alienation and despair that have channeled new recruits into the inferno of violence.

In 1995, Nahnah received almost as many votes as FIS candidates did in 1991. This demonstrates that the Islamic current in Algerian civil society must be a party to any resolution of the country's horrors. This is why the Platform of Rome in January 1995 and the Appeal for Peace in November 1996 called for all parties to recognize one another, to end the violence (both by the Islamists and the government), and to commit themselves to genuinely democratic procedures. In 1990 and 1991, the regime of President Chadli Benjedid, which began Algeria's experiment in political liberalization, failed to negotiate a democratic pact that reflected Algerian diversity and pluralism. That task remains to be carried out. ■

## BOOK REVIEWS

### ON AFRICA

#### Township Politics:

#### Civic Struggles for a New South Africa

By Mzwanele Mayekiso. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1996. 283 pp., \$30 cloth, \$18 paper.

*Township Politics* is a personal account of the author's involvement in the South African anti-apartheid movement in the black township of Alexandra, where he served as secretary of the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC). An hour's drive north of Johannesburg, Alexandra played an integral part in the struggle against apartheid: in February 1986, the AAC organized the Six Days War, the nearly weeklong struggle during which the community took control of the township before being suppressed by security forces. During the Six Days War the township created its own government based on what the "civics" (community organizations) called "ungovernability." The principle of ungovernability was to render the apartheid regime inadequate so that "organs of people's power" could create a political system for the majority of South Africans. Because of Mayekiso's involvement in the AAC, and his role in the Six Days War, he spent three years in jail.

If *Township Politics* has a flaw, it is Mayekiso's brevity in discussing how South Africa's political struggle could help other nations. Given that Mayekiso is neither an academic nor a politician, his lack of pretension provides the candor from which civic organizations in other parts of the world, including those in urban areas of the United States, can gain valuable insight. Mayekiso, however, spends only four pages on how South Africa fits into the global picture of human rights and the future of civic politics, leaving open the question of what impact an unproven democratic socialist society could have on future politics.

Michael Bonenberger

### ALSO RECEIVED

#### Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention: World Politics and the Dilemmas of Help

By Thomas G. Weiss and Cindy Collins. Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1996. 239 pp., \$14.95.

The deluge of nightmarish episodes from places like Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, and northern Iraq

has spurred humanitarian instincts around the world. However, with instances of mass human suffering becoming more "case-specific," presenting thorny ethical dilemmas that fly in the face of traditional response strategies, and an increasingly diverse spectrum of humanitarian objectives, unified international response to such crises is becoming an increasingly complicated issue.

Most current humanitarian dilemmas involve difficult trade-offs; for example, when should military coercion take the place of traditional peace-keeping measures? Is it more efficient for humanitarians to expend resources on temporary assistance or should they help crisis-ridden countries work toward long-term economic development? At the heart of the issue is the underlying possibility of more harm than good resulting from a particular humanitarian activity.

This problem has resulted, the authors argue, from a "trial-and-error" approach to humanitarian intervention. Weiss and Collins offer a number of recommendations for an essential remodeling of the humanitarian system, including implementation of a "humanitarian protection force" to act as a "central brain" for the humanitarian safety net during peak periods of violence. They also feel that humanitarian aid should begin to focus more on the prevention of crises, rather than relief after the fact.

But the authors' primary concern is at the individual level: Westerners must abandon the notion that there is a "right" way to help non-Westerners in need. Too often there is an attitude of superiority on the part of the Western humanitarian, a belief that the implementation of Western doctrine will improve any situation. Such an attitude often ignores the specific situations of the people humanitarians are trying to help.

Weiss and Collins are ultimately hopeful that less improvised, more successful international responses to human suffering will develop. However, they understand that humanitarians can become wrapped up in idealistic outlooks and bogged down by the dismal reality of war-torn conditions. It is only with a healthy combination of these two perspectives that humanitarians can remain focused and begin to combat the challenges of offering help to those in need.

Emily Shartin ■

# THE MONTH IN REVIEW

March 1997

## INTERNATIONAL

### Arms Control

March 21—In Helsinki, US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin conclude a summit meeting with an agreement that extends the 1993 Start II treaty deadline to eliminate land-based multiple warheads to the end of 2003; in exchange Yeltsin agrees to seek long-delayed ratification of the treaty in the Russian legislature; the summit also produces formal acknowledgment that Russia will negotiate a separate agreement with NATO before the planned expansion of the alliance in July.

### European Union

March 24—The EU revokes special trading privileges for Burma because of reports that Burmese export-oriented industries are using forced labor.

### United Nations

March 7—The US vetoes an otherwise unanimous Security Council resolution denouncing an Israeli government plan to build new Jewish housing in predominantly Arab East Jerusalem as a violation of international law that jeopardizes Middle East peace.

March 13—The UN General Assembly adopts a resolution condemning the East Jerusalem Israeli construction plan in a 130-2 vote, with 2 abstentions and 51 members declining to participate in the vote.

March 21—The US again vetoes a Security Council resolution calling for Israel to refrain from carrying out its East Jerusalem construction plan; in today's vote, Costa Rica abstains.

March 28—With China abstaining, the Security Council votes 14 to 0 to authorize a multinational force of about 5,000 troops to provide security for relief efforts in Albania and to encourage a return to order in the country.

## ALBANIA

March 1—After talks with opposition parties, President Sali Berisha announces the resignation of the government of Prime Minister Aleksandr Meksi; Berisha says his Democratic Party will form a new cabinet.

Some 5,000 demonstrators clash with riot police in Tirana, the capital, and armed mobs take control of the southern city of Vlore; riots have shaken the country since January over the loss of an estimated \$1 billion invested by the public in pyramid schemes that have collapsed.

March 2—The government declares a nationwide state of emergency, banning gatherings of more than 4 people and authorizing the use of "all force" by the army, police, and secret police.

March 3—Parliament votes to reappoint President Berisha for a 5-year term.

March 11—Berisha appoints Bashkim Fino of the opposition Socialist Party prime minister.

March 13—Authorities in Tirana distribute weapons to civilians they believe will be loyal to the Berisha government; gunfire and looting are reported throughout the city.

March 16—*The New York Times* reports that at least 27 people have been killed in Tirana since March 12, bringing to at least 39 the number killed this month in violence throughout the country.

March 28—An Italian navy ship reportedly rams a boat carrying an estimated 117 Albanian refugees, causing it to sink in rough seas; 34 people are rescued; more than 12,000 Albanians have fled to Italy in the past 2 weeks.

Gunmen kill 5 people in the northern town of Shkoder, and 1 person is killed in Vlore; yesterday a battle in the central village of Levan left 17 people dead, and 2 days ago 1 person was killed in an attack on a public bus in Tirana.

March 30—About 7,000 people rally in Vlore to denounce Italy over the sinking of a refugee boat 2 days ago.

## ALGERIA

March 25—A bomb kills 2 people and wounds 12 at the house of a suspected member of the militant Islamic Salvation Army; the rival Armed Islamic Group is suspected in the attack.

March 26—The government says that in the past 4 days it has killed Yihad Riane, believed to have been a leader of the Armed Islamic Group, and Abdelkadur Seddouki, thought to have been the leader of the Jihad Armed Islamic Front.

## ARGENTINA

March 19—The government restores to the Colla Indians ownership of 308,900 acres of their ancestral land; an additional 988,400 acres of land are to be restored to indigenous people in Argentina by 1998.

## BELARUS

March 15—In Minsk, approximately 10,000 protesters demonstrate against President Alexander Lukashenko; in November, Lukashenko dissolved the parliament and appointed his own loyalist assembly after securing greater powers in a referendum.

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

March 6—The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe announces that municipal elections in Bosnia will be postponed from July until September to allow international monitors to organize and raise funds to hold the elections; the elections have already been postponed twice because of voter registration fraud.

## CAMBODIA

March 30—At least 10 people are killed and more than 100 are wounded in a multiple-grenade attack on an opposition rally in Phnom Penh.

March 31—The toll in yesterday's grenade attack rises to 16 dead and almost 120 wounded; no one has taken responsibility for the attack.

## CHINA

March 5—The government says it has arrested several suspects in 3 February 25 bombings in Urumuqi, the capital of the



predominantly Muslim province of Xinjiang; the bombings killed 9 people and wounded 74; yesterday exiled Uighur nationalists in Kazakhstan claimed responsibility for the bombings and for another attack on March 3.

March 7—A bomb explodes on a Beijing bus, seriously wounding at least 10 people; the bomb reportedly was similar to those used in the February 25 attacks by Muslim separatists in Urumuqi.

March 18—The government sends high-level North Korean defector Hwang Jang Yop to the Philippines, where he is expected to stay before going to South Korea; the move ends a diplomatic standoff that began February 12 when Hwang sought political asylum at the South Korean consulate in Beijing.

## COLOMBIA

March 7—Justice Minister Carlos Medellín announces that the government will resume coca eradication efforts; on March 5 the government announced it would stop its coca crop spraying in response to the US "decertification" last month of Colombia as a country cooperative with US antidrug policies.

March 16—Defense Minister Guillermo Alberto González resigns in the wake of his March 14 admission of having accepted money from a suspected drug ringleader in his 1989 congressional campaign.

## COMOROS

March 15—Clashes between government troops and secessionists on the island of Anjouan leave 4 people dead and at least 20 wounded.

## EGYPT

March 15—Police report that the militant fundamentalist Islamic Group is responsible for the March 13 murder of 13 people in the southern village of Ezbet Dawoud.

## EL SALVADOR

March 25—Unofficial final results of the March 16 elections show that the incumbent Republican Nationalist Alliance (ARENA) won approximately 33.3% of the national vote, while the leftist, formerly guerrilla Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) won 32.1%; this gives ARENA 28 deputies and FMLN 27 in the new congress taking office May 1; a final vote count has been delayed due to "technical difficulties."

## FRANCE

March 29—Tens of thousands of people demonstrate in Strasbourg against the right-wing, anti-immigrant National Front, whose annual convention opened there today.

## GERMANY

March 5—In Germany's largest security operation since World War II, a much-protested nuclear waste shipment arrives in Gorleben under massive police protection; 5,000 protesters had set up blockades along the road from Dannenberg, and hundreds more demonstrated today at Gorleben; 2 days ago a pipe bomb exploded along the shipment's route in Hanau.

## HAITI

March 7—In Miami, a US federal court indicts Joseph Michel François, the former Port-au-Prince chief of police who helped plan the 1991 overthrow of former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, on charges of participating in a Colombian drug-smuggling operation through Haiti into the US.

## INDIA

March 30—The Congress Party withdraws its support from the minority coalition government of Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda; Congress leader Sitaram Kesri cites what he calls the government's failure to prevent ethnoreligious fragmentation, but rivals accuse him of trying to create a political crisis to avoid being replaced as party leader.

## ISRAEL

March 7—The government decides to withdraw Israeli troops from 9% of the West Bank; today is the deadline under the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace accords for further Israeli withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territory.

March 11—Israeli newspapers publish the text of a letter from King Hussein of Jordan, delivered to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on March 9, condemning Netanyahu's actions, including this month's decision to build Jewish housing in predominantly Arab East Jerusalem, as destructive to the Middle East peace process and their political and personal relationship.

March 16—King Hussein visits Israel to convey his condolences for the murder of 7 Israeli schoolgirls by a Jordanian soldier on March 13.

March 21—In Tel Aviv, 3 people are killed in a suicide bombing at a café; the suicide bomber, a Palestinian from an area near Hebron, is also killed; the militant Islamic group Hamas says it is responsible.

March 28—US special envoy Dennis Ross concludes 2 days of meetings with Palestinian and Israeli leaders aimed at ending the current wave of violence.

## JAPAN

March 21—A former official of Aum Shinrikyo, the cult that killed 12 people in a 1995 nerve gas attack in a Tokyo subway, testifies in Tokyo that the cult had planned nerve gas attacks in the US in 1994.

March 26—Nobuharu Okamitsu, former vice minister of health and welfare, pleads guilty to accepting about \$500,000 in bribes while in office.

## JORDAN

March 13—A Jordanian soldier kills 7 Israeli schoolgirls and injures 6 others when he opens fire on a group of girls visiting a site in the Jordan Valley on a school field trip.

## KOREA, SOUTH

March 10—The National Assembly passes a labor bill to replace the December 26 law that touched off weeks of strikes and protests; the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, which led the strikes, immediately denounces the new legislation and vows to organize new protests.

## LIBERIA

March 7—Members of the West African peacekeeping force arrest warlord Alhaji Kromah and 40 men allegedly receiving military training at his home; they also discover a large cache of weapons; under the regional peace plan for Liberia, all weapons were to have been turned in by January 31; Kromah is 1 of 3 candidates in presidential elections scheduled for May.

## MEXICO

March 8—Police arrest 2 Jesuit priests in Palenque, a city 90 miles east of the Chiapas state capital of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, and 2 local Mayan Indian leaders on charges that they

participated in an ambush yesterday of police officers who forcibly removed peasants illegally occupying farmland; 2 police officers were killed and 5 others injured in the incident.

March 17—Police arrest Brigadier General Alfredo Navarro Lara on charges of drug trafficking and racketeering.

## NIGERIA

March 12—The military government charges Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka and 11 other dissidents with treason in connection with a series of bomb attacks on the army; the playwright Soyinka, who has been living in exile since 1994, has denied any connection with the bombings.

March 16—Don Etiebet, leader of the opposition National Center Party, is detained without charges in Uyo, in the southeastern part of the country.

March 24—The Shell oil company says that 126 of its employees were taken hostage 2 days ago by villagers in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria; the villagers occupied 6 Shell pumping stations, reportedly to protest the relocation of their local government headquarters.

March 25—A Shell spokesman in Lagos says that 31 of the hostages have been released.

## PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

March 3—Palestinians in Gaza Strip and the West Bank hold a 5-hour general strike to protest Israel's decision last month to build 6,500 Jewish housing units in predominantly Arab East Jerusalem; in Washington, US President Bill Clinton meets with Palestinian Authority President Yasir Arafat and states his disapproval of the Israeli construction plan.

March 20—Outside Bethlehem, Palestinian students protesting Israeli construction in East Jerusalem clash with Israeli soldiers; Israeli forces use tear gas to dispel the protesters.

March 22—In Hebron, Israeli soldiers put down Palestinian protests with tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition; at least 100 Palestinians are injured.

March 24—On the West Bank, hundreds of Palestinian demonstrators battle Israeli soldiers; 1 Arab is wounded after being shot by Israeli soldiers at a Gaza checkpoint; the Palestinian Authority suspends security ties with Israel.

March 26—Rioting continues in the West Bank, and spreads to the city of Ramallah.

March 29—In Ramallah, Abdullah Khalil Abdullah, a Palestinian student, is killed during a skirmish between Palestinian protesters and Israeli soldiers; the Israeli army says Abdullah's death is being investigated.

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

March 26—About 1,000 protesters, backed by mutinous soldiers, blockade lawmakers inside the parliament building; the protesters are calling for the ouster of Prime Minister Julius Chan because of a plan to pay \$27 million to foreign mercenaries to fight separatist guerrillas on the island of Bougainville; Chan abandoned the plan on March 20 after protests.

## POLAND

March 20—Prime Minister Wlodzimierz Cimoszewicz offers a plan to save 2,000 jobs at the Gdansk shipyard; he warns the Solidarity trade union against turning Poland into "a second Albania" by continuing chaotic protests in Gdansk and Warsaw that began March 12; the shipyard, where Solidarity was born in 1980, was declared bankrupt last year and shut down earlier this month after being refused a \$100 million loan.

## RUSSIA

March 7—President Boris Yeltsin appoints Anatoly Chubais, his chief of staff, as first deputy prime minister.

March 17—In a cabinet shakeup, President Yeltsin appoints Boris Nemtsov, the governor of the Nizhni Novgorod region, to serve with Chubais as a first deputy prime minister.

March 27—In Moscow, thousands of demonstrators mass in Red Square to protest poor economic conditions, including 8 months of unpaid salaries and stipends, as part of a nationwide strike in which almost 2 million people participated.

## SOUTH AFRICA

March 12—Clashes following a protest march by thousands of Zulus in Johannesburg leave 3 people dead and at least 9 wounded; the marchers were protesting the killings of 8 people when ANC headquarters guards opened fire at a similar march in 1994; during the rally today, prosecutors announced they would begin investigating the 1994 killings.

## SRI LANKA

March 21—A bomb in the northern village of Koswatte injures 10 people; the bomb was thrown at supporters of the governing People's Alliance, whose war against Tamil separatists is the main issue in local elections being held today throughout the country.

## SWITZERLAND

March 5—The government proposes creating a \$4.7 billion fund by updating the value of the country's gold reserves, and using the interest each year to help victims of the Holocaust and other calamities; in a separate proposal, the Swiss National Bank offers to donate \$70 million to a fund set up last month by private banks to provide short-term aid to Holocaust survivors.

## TAIWAN

March 22—The Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet, arrives; it is the 1st time he has visited Chinese territory since he fled the establishment of Chinese rule in Tibet in 1959.

## TAJIKISTAN

March 8—In Moscow, the Tajikistan government and the Islamic opposition sign an agreement, witnessed by Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov and UN Special Envoy Gerd Merrem, that establishes a plan to absorb the opposition guerrillas into the government army by July 1998; political talks are scheduled for April in Teheran.

## THAILAND

March 5—Thai General Chetta Thanajaro says that Thailand will allow any unarmed Karen refugees and guerrillas fleeing Burma's army to enter the country, but that guerrillas are not to use Thailand as a base for attacks in Burma; in the past month the Burmese army has pushed ethnic insurgents out of most of eastern Burma, but until today Thailand had been forcing refugees to turn back at the border.

## UGANDA

March 5—The *New York Times* reports that late last month members of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army killed 9 people in the northern village of Palabek; since January the Sudan-backed rebels have intensified their campaign to destabilize the north, killing at least 400 people, abducting hundreds more, and burning farms and schools.

## UKRAINE

March 18—Tens of thousands of people march throughout the country to protest unpaid wages and to support a return to Communist rule.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### Great Britain

March 17—Prime Minister John Major calls a national election for May 1 and says he will face Labour Party leader Tony Blair in the country's 1st televised debates.

March 26—Two explosions apparently by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) disable a major rail junction at Wilmslow, 160 miles north of London, but injure no one.

### Northern Ireland

March 26—A suspected IRA member fires an explosive at a police station in Coalisland, Northern Ireland; police return fire, seriously wounding 1 man.

## UNITED STATES

March 16—A jury rules that the US is entitled to \$7.9 million of the \$9 million it confiscated from Mario Ruiz Massieu, the former Mexican antidrug program coordinator, after determining that all but \$1.1 million was bribes from drug traffickers.

March 23—In Brazzaville, Congo, the first half of a 100-member US Army air unit arrives for the possible evacuation of 500 Americans and other foreign nationals in Zaire; the 50 paratroopers join 30 American troops who arrived in the area yesterday.

March 26—The government recalls Kenneth Yalowitz, the US ambassador to Belarus, and expels a Belarus diplomat in response to Belarus's March 23 expulsion of a US diplomat who observed an antigovernment demonstration in Minsk.

## ZAIRE

March 9—UN officials begin an operation to find an estimated 100,000 or more Rwandan refugees in the forests west of Tingi Tingi, where 2 camps were abandoned March 1 as rebels of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire advanced.

March 15—Rebels seize control of Kisangani, the country's 3d-largest city and a key strategic and political prize.

March 21—President Mobutu Sese Seko returns to Zaire from France, where he was being treated for cancer.

March 24—Mobutu accepts a March 18 parliamentary vote to oust Prime Minister Léon Kengo wa Dondo, and Kengo announces his resignation.

March 27—A UN official says the rebels have agreed to let the UN help 100,000 Rwandan refugees return home.

March 28—A rebel spokesman says his forces have taken Kasenga, a town on the Zambian border, and have advanced to within 60 miles of Lubumbashi, the country's 2d-largest city and the capital of Shaba province.

March 29—An army spokesman dismisses as propaganda yesterday's claim by rebels of having captured Kasenga. ■

*Erratum:* On page 167 of Jonathan Tucker's article, "The Biological Weapons Threat," in the April 1997 issue, tularemia bacteria should not be classed as a biological weapons agent that causes a nonfatal but debilitating illness.

## Announcing the Current History Audiocassette Series

Current History's editors have excerpted choice articles from recent issues and are making them available in 90-minute audio presentations.

Use the order form on the back cover to add *Current History* to your audio library today at the special price of \$9.95 each!

Catch up on key regions and events in recent history – as viewed by the experts at *Current History*. Each 90-minute audiocassette features the best of our recent coverage of a major region to give you the insight you need into the trends and events that are shaping our world – and our future.

### Volume 1: "The Disintegration of the Soviet Union"

Chart the course of the Soviet Union's demise with *Current History's* esteemed coverage.

### Volume 2: "China Rising: A Superpower Awakes"

*Current History's* China experts guide you through China's dramatic economic and cultural evolution.

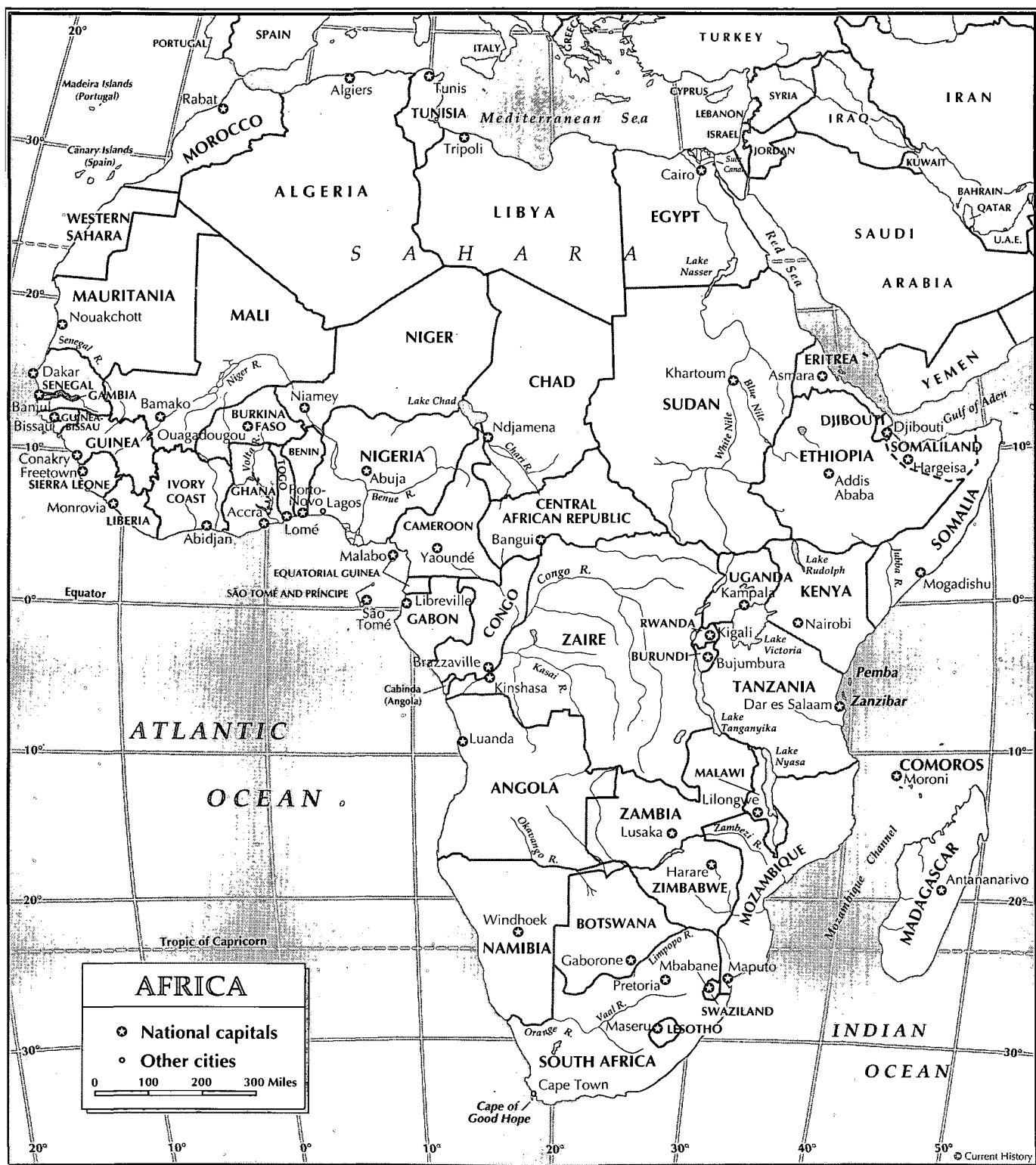
### Volume 3: "The Fundamentalist Challenge in the Middle East"

The Islamic threat to peace and democracy in the Middle East is explored in this collection, which includes in-depth examinations of religious fundamentalism's impact on Egypt, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority.

### Volume 4: "Latin America: Open for Business?"

The prospects for economic integration after NAFTA, along with the economic travails of Mexico and the market successes of Chile, are among the topics covered in this assessment of the new business climate in Latin America.





# Take advantage of Current History's consistent excellence in covering the world by ordering one of the following special products.

## Regional & Country Complete Sets

Current History is now offering a complete set of issues on the following countries and regions. Only US\$19.95 per set.

### The Soviet Union

- 1 - (1980-83) 3 - (1988-91)  
2 - (1984-87)

### Russia and Eurasia

- 4 - (1992-95)

### Africa

- 5 - (1980-84) 7 - (1990-94)  
6 - (1985-89)

### India and South Asia

- 8 - (1982, '86, '89, '92)

### Southeast Asia

- 9 - (1980, '83, '84, '87, '90)

### The Middle East

- 10 - (1980, '81, '84, '87) 11A - (1993-95)  
11 - (1988-92)

### South America

- 12 - (1986-89, '91)

### Latin America

- 13 - (1980-82, '84)  
13A - (1990, '93, '94, '95)

### Europe

- 14 - West (1981, '82, '84, '86, '88)  
15 - East (1981, '82, '85, '87, '89)  
16 - (1990-94)

### China

- 17 - (1980-84) 19 - (1990-94)  
18 - (1985-89)

### Canada

- 20 - (1980, '84, '88, '91)

### Japan

- 21 - (1983, '85, '88, '91)

### Mexico

- 22 - (1981, '83, '87, '93)

### Central America

- 23 - (1986, '87, '88, '91)

## Current History on Audiocassettes

### Audiocassette Series: Volume 1

"The Disintegration of the Soviet Union"

### Audiocassette Series: Volume 2

"China Rising: A Superpower Awakes"

### Audiocassette Series: Volume 3

"The Fundamental Challenge in the Middle East"

### Audiocassette Series: Volume 4

"Latin America: Open for Business?"

All Audiocassette Series tapes are US\$9.95 each.

## Current History Binders

A sturdy, hardcover binder with Current History for permanent. The easy-to-use binder holds Current History securely in place with flexible steel rods. US\$9.95

Call and place your order at  
1-800-726-4464

(9am - 5pm EST - weekdays, in the  
For American Express, Visa, or MasterCard)

## Issues Available in Bulk or Single Copy

Current History offers special discounts for orders of 10 or more copies of the same issue, and for 10 or more subscriptions mailed to the same address.

### Available from the 1997-1998 Series

- 9/97 - China  
10/97 - Russia and Eurasia  
11/97 - The Global Economy  
12/97 - Asia  
1/98 - The Middle East  
2/98 - Latin America  
3/98 - Europe  
4/98 - International Narcopolitics  
5/98 - Africa

### Quantity Discount Price:

10 or more copies of the same issue,  
US\$3.25 per copy - a savings of more than  
30% (single-copy price \$4.95).

Copies more than five years old:  
US\$6.00 per copy.

### Quantity Subscription Price:

10 or more subscriptions mailed to the  
same address: US\$24.75 per subscription.

### Still available! 1996-1997 Series

- 9/96 - China  
10/96 - Russia and Eurasia  
11/96 - Global Security:  
The Human Dimension  
12/96 - Asia  
1/97 - The Middle East  
2/97 - Latin America  
3/97 - Europe  
4/97 - The Arms Race Revisited  
5/97 - Africa

### 1995-1996 Series

- 9/95 - China  
10/95 - Russia and Eurasia  
11/95 - The Postwar Triad: Japan,  
Germany, and the US  
12/95 - Southeast Asia  
1/96 - The Middle East  
2/96 - Latin America  
3/96 - Eastern Europe  
4/96 - India and South Asia  
5/96 - Africa

Please send me the information I have indicated below, in the quantities marked.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check enclosed for US\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Bill me

For American Express, Visa or Mastercard orders, call toll free, 1-800-726-4464 (9am - 5pm EST - weekdays in the US)

**Please Note:** Add US\$6.75 per year for foreign orders; US\$7.75 for Canadian orders (price includes GST). All prices are good only on new products ordered directly from the publisher. Bulk subscription prices are based on a single mailing address for all issues ordered.

## Magazine subscriptions

- ☐ One-year subscription: (9 issues) US\$32.00  
☐ Two-year subscription: (18 issues) US\$61.00  
☐ Three-year subscription: (27 issues) US\$91.00  
☐ 10 or more subscriptions to one address  
Send me \_\_\_\_\_ subscriptions at US\$24.75 each

## Audiocassettes (US\$9.95 each)

- ☐ Vol. 1 "The Disintegration of the Soviet Union"  
☐ Vol. 2 "China Rising: A Superpower Awakes"  
☐ Vol. 3 "The Fundamental Challenge in the Middle East"  
☐ Vol. 4 "Latin America: Open for Business?"

## Binders

- ☐ Current History Binders: US\$9.95 each  
Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ binders.

## Current History Index

- ☐ A bound author-subject index of Current History issues between 1980 and 1995 is now available. US\$9.95

## Regional & Country Sets

Please send me the sets listed below. See list above.

- |         |           |           |          |
|---------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1 _____ | 8 _____   | 13A _____ | 20 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 9 _____   | 14 _____  | 21 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 10 _____  | 15 _____  | 22 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 11 _____  | 16 _____  | 23 _____ |
| 5 _____ | 11A _____ | 17 _____  |          |
| 6 _____ | 12 _____  | 18 _____  |          |
| 7 _____ | 13 _____  | 19 _____  |          |

## Bulk purchase or single copy of issue

Please send me the quantity of issues listed by date below.

- |             |             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 9/95 _____  | 4/96 _____  | 2/97 _____  | 12/97 _____ |
| 10/95 _____ | 5/96 _____  | 3/97 _____  | 1/98 _____  |
| 11/95 _____ | 9/96 _____  | 4/97 _____  | 2/98 _____  |
| 12/95 _____ | 10/96 _____ | 5/97 _____  | 3/98 _____  |
| 1/96 _____  | 11/96 _____ | 9/97 _____  | 4/98 _____  |
| 2/96 _____  | 12/96 _____ | 10/97 _____ | 5/98 _____  |
| 3/96 _____  | 1/97 _____  | 11/97 _____ |             |

Send this completed form along with check to:  
**Current History Magazine**  
4225 Main St., Philadelphia, PA 19127 • 215-482-4464  
Fax: 215-482-9923